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THE STORY OF
THE KHEDIVATE

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OF

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BY

EDWARD DICEY, C.B.

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PREFACE

It was in September, 1869, that I first set foot in Egypt. It was in July of the past year that I last quitted Cairo. During this period of thirty odd years I paid any number of visits to the valley of the Nile, and even during the intervals in which my visits were intermitted I was always in close communication with residents in the country in connection with Egyptian affairs, both political, social, and financial. By the accidents of fortune, I was closely associated with many of the leading personages, English, foreign, and native, who have had to do with the development of Egypt, and I can say with truth that there is scarcely any man of note in Egypt, throughout the last three decades, with whom I have not had more or less intimate, personal relations.

It so happened that the period in question coincides almost exactly in point of time with the course of events which has caused England to become the dominant Power in Egypt. The construction of the Suez Canal compelled England, as Mistress of India, to regard the ascendency of any European Power in

Egypt as a source of peril to her Empire. The extravagance of Ismail Pasha, and the indebtedness which Egypt, under his reign, contracted abroad, necessitated International intervention by the European creditors. The Arabi mutiny led to the massacres of Alexandria, and to the armed intervention of Great Britain. The campaign, which ended at Tel-el-Kebir, brought about the military occupation of Egypt by British troops. The occupation, which was intended to be temporary, became permanent, owing to the insurrection of the Mahdi in the Soudan. The necessity of rendering Egypt capable of defending herself against external attack and internal disturbance led England to undertake the reorganization of Egypt under British supervision. The system of supervision developed, by the logic of facts, into British administration; and finally the reconquest of the Soudan by the Anglo-Egyptian army converted our nominal control into a virtual Protectorate.

It has seemed to me that a consecutive narrative of the events, which, under the Khedivate, has rendered England the permanent Power in Egypt, has not yet been given. It has seemed to me also that my personal acquaintance with the personages by whom, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously, British authority has been made supreme in Egypt, gave me special facilities for writing such a narrative. Whether I have succeeded or failed in giving an intelligible account of a very curious chapter of

Egyptian and British history is a matter not for me but for my readers to decide.

Meanwhile, whatever the decision may be, I wish to express my gratitude for the valuable assistance I have received in the compilation of this narrative from my friends, Lord Cromer, Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, Boghos Pasha Nubar, Artim Pasha, and Charles Royle, the author of the Egyptian military campaigns. I, for my own part, shall be well content if the "Story of the Khedivate" should lead my fellow-countrymen to appreciate more fully than they, perhaps, have done hitherto, the part England has played in the fortunes of a country with which I, after a humble fashion, have been so long and so closely associated.

EDWARD DICEY.

LONDON,
1st January, 1902.

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE ORIGIN OF THE KHEDIVIAL DYNASTY 1

Egypt under the Mamelukes—Mahomet Ali nominated Pasha of Egypt—Story of his career—Massacre of the Mamelukes—Invasion of the Soudan—Reign of Mahomet Ali—Estimate of his character—His revolt against Turkey—Interference of European Powers—On conclusion of peace Mahomet Ali surrenders Syria, and is declared by Turkey Hereditary Viceroy.

THE REIGNS OF ABBAS AND SAID 2

Character of Abbas Pasha—Introduction of railways into Egypt Story of Abbas' death at Benha Accession of Said Pasha—Catastrophe of Kafr el Zahat—Issue of the first Egyptian loan.

THE SUEZ CANAL 25

Ferdinand de Lesseps' connection with Egypt—British opposition to the Suez Canal—M. de Lesseps' character—Concession granted by Said Pasha—The Porte refuses to sanction concession as originally proposed—Financial difficulties of construction—Corvée system forbidden—Award of Napoleon III.—Unfairness of award.

THE ACCESSION OF ISMAIL PASHA 47

State of Egypt on commencement of Ismail's reign Personal character of new Viceroy—Temptations to which he was subjected—The cotton boom during the Secession War.

THE PURSE OF FORTUNATUS 56

Early life of Ismail—Visit of Sultan to Egypt Title of Khedive granted—Change in law of succession—Lavish outlay both public and private—Immense appropriation of lands—Amount of indebtedness.

PAGE

ISMAIL IN HIS GRANDEUR 72

Inauguration of Suez Canal—Concourse of visitors to Egypt—Ismail pays cost of their entertainment—Construction of road to Pyramids—The corvée at work—Lavish magnificence of the inaugural ceremonies—Extraordinary repute of Ismail at this period From Ismailia to Chislehurst.

THE ROAD TO RUIN 84

Sultan forbids issue of further loans in Egypt—Ismail and his financial agents—Services rendered by the Mufettish—The Khedive resorts to desperate expedients to avoid bankruptcy—The forced loan of the Moukabala—Gathering of birds of prey at Cairo—Sale by Ismail of his Suez Canal shares to England—Payment of State bonds suspended.

THE CREDIT SIDE OF THE ACCOUNT 106

Loss entailed on Egypt by Ismail's extravagance—Impossibility of ascertaining exact amount of debts incurred Unjust charges against the bondholders—Indirect advantages derived by Egypt from Ismail's expenditure.

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA 112

Nubar's arrival in Egypt—Appointed secretary to Ibrahim Pasha—Anecdotes of Ibrahim—Enters public service as manager of the State railways.

THE CAVE MISSION 132

Mr. Cave arrives in Egypt on special mission from the British Government—Origin of the mission—General impression in Egypt that mission intended to arrange for a British Protectorate—Probable explanation of causes which led to the abrupt termination of the mission—Mr. Cave leaves Egypt and issues his report—The Khedive thereupon suspends payment.

FIRST STAGE OF INTERVENTION. 142

Proposal to establish a State bank—Nubar quits Egypt for Europe—Ismail arbitrarily consolidates State Debts and fixes rate of interest—His Highness proposes appointment of an International Commission of the Public Debt—Bondholders demand further investigation before approving the proposal—Messrs. Goschen and Joubert selected to conduct investigation—Goschen-Joubert report—Arrest and death of the Mufettish.

PAGE

THE SECOND STAGE OF INTERVENTION 162

Ismail proposes a compromise to the creditors of Egypt and issues a decree appointing Commission of the Public Debt—Proposal accepted by France, Austria, and Italy—England refuses to nominate a member of the Commission Compromise rejected by French bondholders—International courts declare compromise invalid—Egyptian defeat in war with Abyssinia Action of Nubar Pasha in Europe—Appointment of Commission of Inquiry—Publication of article in *Nineteenth Century* —True causes of Egyptian debt.

THE ANGLO-FRENCH MINISTRY 189

Khedive establishes responsible Government in Egypt—Appoints Nubar Pasha Premier—Mr. Rivers Wilson Minister of Finance, and M. de Blignières Minister of Public Works.

THE COUP D'ÉTAT 206

Reassembling of Commission of Inquiry—Ministry propose to postpone payment of various short loans—Ismail protests against proposal and dismisses his foreign Ministers—England and France decline to interfere.

THE DEPOSITION OF ISMAIL PASHA 213

Germany intervenes to uphold the authority of the International courts—England, France, and Germany then call on the Sultan to depose the Khedive—Sultan issues orders for Ismail's deposition—Ismail's interview with Tewfik on resigning the throne—The ex-Khedive leaves Egypt—His life in exile.

EGYPT UNDER LIQUIDATION 227

Accession of Tewfik—Nomination of Dual Control Financial difficulties—Appointment of Commission of Liquidation—Summary of their report The estate of Ismail Pasha Sadyk.

THE DUAL CONTROL 243

Tewfik's attempt at retrenchment Economics introduced under the Dual Control—Difficulties of foreign administration—Discontent in the Soudan—Causes of the slave trade.

THE ARABI MUTINY 25

Origin of the Mutiny—Wholesale reduction of army—Jealousy between Circassian and Egyptian officers Understanding between Ismail and the discontented officers Appointment of Mahmoud Sami as Minister of War—Order to arrest the "three colonels"—Troops intervene to prevent arrest—Emeute before Abdin palace.

PAGE

THE NATIONALITY MOVEMENT 258

Arabi secures English supporters—Sir William Gregory and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt—The cry for Egyptian nationality—Daoud Pasha appointed Minister of War—Renewed demonstration of Arabi's troops.

THE CHAMBER OF NOTABLES 265

Convocation of Chamber of Notables—Programme of the Chamber—England and France protest against programme—Joint Anglo-French note.

THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP 272

Programme of the Mahmoud Ministry Circassian officers arrested and sentenced to deportation to the Soudan—Sentence remitted by Khedive—Deposition of Khedive threatened—Arrival of Anglo-French squadron—English and French Consuls-General demand Arabi's exile, who forthwith resigns—Army demands Arabi's reinstatement as Minister—Khedive gives way and asks for Turkish intervention—Dervish Pasha sent by Sultan as Turkish commissioner.

THE MASSACRES OF ALEXANDRIA 279

Difficulty of obtaining truth about the massacres—Suspicion points to Arabi as *particeps criminis*—Arabi decorated by Sultan after the massacres—France declines joining England in any armed intervention, and recalls her fleet.

THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA 286

Khedive leaves Cairo for Alexandria—Difficulties of his position—Arabi orders armament of harbour forts—British Admiral demands cessation of armament as being inconsistent with safety of British fleet—Arabi refuses compliance—Bombardment commenced and Egyptian forts silenced on the same day—Arabi withdraws army to Kafr Douar, and advises Khedive to demand a truce—Khedive places himself under British protection and dismisses Arabi Chamber of Notables protests against Arabi's dismissal and repudiates authority of the Khedive.

BRITISH INTERVENTION 293

British army sent to Egypt under Sir Garnet Wolseley—Conference at Constantinople—British Government proposes self-denying ordinance—Occupation of Suez Canal—Opposition of M. de Lesseps.

TEL-EL-KEBIR 299

The British fleet enters the Canal—Occupation of Port Said and Ismailia—Battle of Tel-el-Kebir—Rapid advance on Cairo—Termination of the war.

PAGE

AFTER THE MUTINY 313

Collapse of the mutiny—Early withdrawal announced of British troops—Lord Dufferin sent to Cairo—Trial of Arabi and his colleagues—Sentence of death vetoed by British Government Prisoners pleaded guilty, and punishment of death commuted to exile.

THE RISING OF THE MAHDI 316

Insurrection in the Soudan—Abolition of slavery in Egypt by Khedivial decree in 1881 Mahdi rising at Kench.

LORD DUFFERIN'S REPORT 325

Mr. Gladstone's Government reaffirms its intention of an early withdrawal from Egypt—Lord Dufferin instructed to draw up a report on the future administration of Egypt—General character of this report—Recommends abolition of Dual Control and reorganization of Egyptian army under British officers—Valentine Pasha appointed Sirdar by the Khedive—Appointment cancelled by orders of the British Government—Loss of golden opportunity for abolishing International Boards throughout Egypt.

THE EVACUATION OF THE SOUDAN 336

Sir Evelyn Baring becomes our Consul-General—His exceptional qualifications for post On news of Hicks's defeat England insists on evacuation of the Soudan by Egypt Ismail Pasha's views on evacuation General indignation in Egypt—Cherif Pasha resigns and is succeeded by Nubar Pasha, who consents to carry out policy of evacuation—Egyptian troops sent under Baker Pasha to rescue garrisons in Eastern Soudan—Defeat and rout of El Teb—Sinkat and Tokar captured by the Dervishes.

GORDON'S RETURN 357

Gordon sent to the Soudan to rescue the Egyptian garrisons Lord Beaconsfield on Gordon.

THE SECOND NUBAR PASHA MINISTRY 361

Nubar's policy as Premier—Dispute between Nubar and Clifford Lloyd—Financial embarrassment of Egypt—The London Conference.

THE FALL OF KHARTOUM 373

Position of Gordon at Khartoum—He asks that Zobehr should be sent to succeed him as Governor—British Government refuses request, but resolves to send British army to rescue Gordon under Lord Wolseley—Army despatched too late—Narrative of campaign—Fall of Khartoum and death of Gordon—Expedition ordered to invade Soudan from the Red Sea—Expedition abandoned owing to Russian scare—Death of Mahdi.

PAGE

THE NORTHBROOK MISSION 392

Effect in Egypt of the withdrawal of the British troops from the Soudan—Recurrence of financial difficulties—Difficult position of Nubar as Premier—Sir Evelyn Baring summoned home to consult with her Majesty's Government—Lord Northbrook sent out to Egypt—He orders funds hypothecated to the service of the Debt to be paid into Treasury—Continental Powers protest—International courts decide in favour of the protest—The London Conference—The Suez Canal neutralized—Proposal to construct second canal—Zobehr Pasha imprisoned at Gibraltar.

THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION 406

Sir H. Drummond Wolff sent to Constantinople as High Commissioner to negotiate Convention with Turkey in respect of Egypt—His appointment mainly due to Lord Randolph Churchill's influence—Mukhtar Pasha selected as fellow-commissioner—Negotiations at Cairo suspended by Ministerial crisis in England—Negotiations resumed on Lord Salisbury's return to office—Convention concluded at Cairo—Rejected by the Porte at instance of France.

THE DERVISH INVASION OF EGYPT 419

Anticipations of Dervish raid on Egypt—Advance delayed by sudden death of the Mahdi—Abdullah el Taashi becomes ruler of the Soudan as Khalifa—Battle of Toski—Rout of Dervishes—Cessation of active hostilities between the Soudan and Egypt.

EGYPT UNDER BRITISH SUPERVISION 426

Apparent indifference of Egypt to the Soudanese campaigns—Rigid economy introduced into the administration of Egypt under British control—Reconstruction of native army—Divergences of view between Nubar Pasha and Sir Evelyn Baring—Resignation of Nubar Pasha—Estimate of Nubar's policy.

POSITION OF TEWFIK AFTER THE MUTINY 445

Tewfik's attitude towards England—French influence with his Highness causes him to be suspicious of British policy—Explanation of the hostile disposition of France—Riaz retires from Premiership owing to his opposition to legal reforms—Project for establishment of German chartered Company in the Soudan—Death of Tewfik.

THE ACCESSION OF ABBAS II. 457

Early education of Abbas II.—Was a student at Vienna when called to succeed his father on the throne—Surrounded at Vienna by influences unfriendly to England—His formal investiture as Khedive insisted upon by the Sultan—Abbas II. proposes to make Tigrane

PAGE

Pasha Premier—Proposal vetoed by British authorities—Lord Rosebery informs Khedive that the British authorities must be consulted in his choice of his Ministers—Riaz Pasha appointed Premier—Khedive on a review of Egyptian army expresses disapproval of manœuvres as executed by troops—The Sirdar thereupon resigns—The Khedive has to withdraw his censure.

THE ADVANCE ON DONGOLA 472

Secret negotiations between France and Abyssinia—Major Marchand sets forth on a so-called scientific mission from the French Soudan to the White Nile—Menelek expected to send army to meet and support Marchand on his arrival on Soudanese territory—British Government thereupon orders an immediate advance on Dongola—Orders carried out with utmost promptitude.

ON THE ROAD TO KHARTOUM 483

The Egyptian army—Its merits and defects—Occupation of Firket and Dongola—Parliament votes £800,000 for prosecution of Soudan campaign—Victory of Atbara—Capture of Omdurman and flight of the Khalifa—News of Marchand's arrival at Fashoda—The Sirdar starts for Fashoda and hoists Egyptian flag—France agrees to evacuate Fashoda—Pursuit of the Khalifa—His defeat and death at Om Debrikat.

THE "CONDOMINIUM" 499

Convention between England and Egypt for joint administration of the Soudan—Conditions of Convention—Autocratic character of existing administration—Anomalous system has worked satisfactorily—Khedive restricts number of princes—Death of Nubar Pasha Reminiscences of his last days—His funeral at Alexandria.

A RETROSPECT 514

Conclusions of the Retrospect—England's occupation due to accident, not to any deliberate design—Benefits Egypt has derived from British occupation — Extraordinary growth of wealth — Improved conditions of the fellaheen—General sense of security caused by belief in permanence of British occupation—Native sentiment towards our occupation—"Tommy Atkins" the true regenerator of Egypt—Ismail's saying about unchangeability of Egypt.

INDEX 529

THE STORY OF THE KHEDIVATE

THE ORIGIN OF THE KHEDIVIAL DYNASTY

Egypt under the Mamelukes—Mahomet Ali nominated Pasha of Egypt—Story of his career—Massacre of the Mamelukes—Invasion of the Soudan—Reign of Mahomet Ali—Estimate of his character—His revolt against Turkey—Interference of European Powers—On conclusion of peace Mahomet Ali surrenders Syria, and is declared by Turkey Hereditary Viceroy.

DURING one of my early visits—now many years ago—to the land of the Pharaohs, I made the acquaintance of an English gentleman, who had devoted much time to the study of Egyptology. Having only a superficial knowledge of the subject, I felt rather at a loss to carry on a discussion my acquaintance had commenced, as to the bearing of certain recently discovered hieroglyphics upon various moot points in the records of ancient Egypt. By a happy inspiration, I put a stop to the discussion by inquiring whether there was any absolute certainty that

the interpretation placed upon the hieroglyphics in question was a correct rendering of the original. The answer, given with some hesitation, was that absolute certainty was out of the question, and that all that could be fairly said as to the received interpretation of hieroglyphics, was that it seemed to be the most probable rendering of the sense contained therein. On receiving this answer, I declined to express any opinion on the matter.

I allude to this incident at the opening of this book in order to warn my readers that they must not expect to find therein any contribution to the history of ancient Egypt. I am concerned only with the latest of the countless series of Governments that have held rule in the valley of the Nile, under which the ruling power in fact, if not in name, has been the Government of England. The remote past—the past of the pyramids, the tombs of the kings, the sphinx, and the statue of Memnon—has as little to do with the period in question as the Phœnician ruins found, or said to be found, in Rhodesia have to do with the Jameson raid. For all practical purposes, the history of the Egypt known to us to-day commences with the first years of the last century, when Mahomet Ali was appointed Pasha. From 1567, when the Turks under Selim I. completed the conquest of Egypt, the history of the country is an absolute blank. This missing link is accounted for in the pages of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" by the following ingenious statement: "It would be tedious and

unprofitable to follow the details of Turkish misrule and tyranny which was from this time presented to the student of Egyptian history." Nubar Pasha, one of the few Egyptian statesmen who ever took any interest in the history of the past, told me that, when he was at the head of the Government, he had the archives searched to discover if any record was forthcoming of the two centuries which intervened between Egypt's passing under the direct rule of the Sultan and the landing of the French at Alexandria in 1798. The search proved utterly barren. It was found impossible even to compose a list of the names of the various Turkish pashas who in rapid succession represented the authority of the Commander of the Faithful in the richest province of the Ottoman Empire. All that is known may be told in a few lines. The country was ruled in reality by the Mamelukes as independent chieftains, acknowledging in theory the suzerainty of the Sultan, but only recognizing it in practice by the irregular payment of an intermittent tribute. When the Mamelukes were not quarrelling with their liege lord, they made war upon each other; and it was by taking advantage of their intestine feuds, and their personal rivalries, that the Turkish pro-consuls contrived to maintain their authority, in such a way as to avoid giving mortal offence to the Sultan on the one hand, or to the Mamelukes on the other. The one aim and object of the pro-consuls was to extract, by any means in their power, during their precarious tenure

of office, a sum sufficient to satisfy the exigencies of the Porte, and to enrich themselves. If they failed to satisfy both the Porte and the Mamelukes, they disappeared, by violence or otherwise, and were seen no more. If they succeeded, they left Egypt men of wealth; and in this case they had every motive for not calling public attention to the incidents of the period during which their ill-gotten wealth had been acquired.

This blank chapter in the chequered history of the valley of the Nile came to a close with the French occupation of Cairo under the Directory. It is a curious subject for contemplation, to speculate as to what might have happened if the great Emperor had not transferred the command of his troops in Egypt to feebler hands, or if, in his absence, the allied forces of England and Turkey had not defeated the French army and compelled it to capitulate at Cairo. But such speculations as to what might have happened, if events had been otherwise than they were, are not only fruitless in themselves, but have no particular bearing on the subject of this narrative. The only reason why I allude to the events in question is that they laid open the ground for the advent of Mahomet Ali, the founder of the Khedivial dynasty. The burden of the war had fallen heavily on the Mameluke chiefs. They had suffered not only in person and in pocket, but still more in prestige. The Turks, on the other hand, had gained in repute, not only by their personal valour on the field of battle, but by the moral

support given them through their alliance with England, the power which had defeated France on Egyptian soil. When the English armies had finally quitted Egypt, the Porte considered the time had come for extending and increasing its authority in Egypt, or to express the same idea in plainer words, for extorting larger and more regular payments in the form of tribute. For this purpose it was essential that the Pasha chosen for the purpose should be not only unscrupulous, but bold and energetic, and the choice of the Porte fell upon Mahomet Ali.

Very little is known of Mahomet Ali's career before his arrival in Egypt. According to a common report, he had originally been a slave in a Turkish household. But of this report there is no adequate confirmation. What seems more certain is that he was an Albanian Mahometan, probably with no Turkish or Semitic blood in his veins, at any rate, on his father's side. In all countries, however, where the harem system prevails, questions of maternity are as difficult of solution as those of paternity are in other and freer lands. A man of humble origin, with little or no fortune, he had made his way to the front by courage and force of character. In Turkey, even more than in other Oriental communities, *la carrière est ouverte aux talents*, provided always those talents are backed by energy and not hampered by scruples. A strong man was wanted in Egypt to carry out the restoration of Turkish authority, and no fitter person could be found than the last of the pashas sent as rulers from the

Bosphorus to the Nile. At the outset, however, of the career which ended in his elevation to the rank of Viceroy, Mahomet Ali was confronted by an obstacle constantly occurring in the later annals of the Ottoman empire. The Porte could appoint him Pasha of Egypt, but was either unable or unwilling to provide him with funds for his outfit. It was understood on both sides that Mahomet Ali was to make as much as he liked at the cost of Egypt, but that his expenses before installation in his Pashalik must be borne by himself. Money he had none, and the policy he intended to pursue on his arrival in Egypt absolutely required his having money enough to take with him a certain number of fellow-adventurers whom he could trust. He tried, it is said, to raise money in many quarters on the strength of his expectations. But the usurers of Galata refused to discount problematical gains, and he was on the eve of throwing up the appointment when he met an Armenian acquaintance, who believed in his future, and who agreed to advance him the few hundred pounds he needed on the understanding that the loan would be repaid liberally as soon as the borrower had come into his fortune. The friend in question is reported to have been the uncle of Nubar Pasha, the great Egyptian statesman; and this incident was regarded in later days as the cause of the signal favour shown throughout his life by Mahomet Ali to the Armenian banker and his relatives.

Within a very short time after Mahomet Ali had

entered upon his functions, the Mameluke chiefs discovered that the new Pasha was not to be bribed, as his predecessors had been, into leaving the administration of the country in their own hands, on condition of his being allowed to share the proceeds of their exactions. He set himself to reorganize the army, and to sow dissensions between the chiefs. There is no satisfactory record forthcoming of the intrigues, conspiracies, outrages, and reprisals, which occurred during the first few years after Mahomet Ali's accession to power. All that is known is that at last the long-smothered disaffection of the Mamelukes burst out into open rebellion. The Pasha had been obliged to go to Suez on account of some local disturbance. The Mamelukes seized the opportunity to assemble in force in the capital, and established their headquarters at the citadel, whose guns commanded, as they do to-day, the city of Cairo. Somehow or other news was conveyed secretly to Mahomet Ali that the Mamelukes had arranged to rise in insurrection, on the morning following the day on which the news was received at Suez, and to take possession of the Government. Without losing a moment, the Pasha mounted a swift dromedary he had with him, and set forth alone to ride across the desert, going by the caravan route, followed in later years by the overland mail. The distance was some eighty miles, and was traversed by the Pasha in about a dozen hours, a "record" speed, which up to this time had been considered impossible of achievement. He arrived in

Cairo before daybreak, presented himself to the regiments which had not overtly joined the conspirators, and induced them to march under his orders and surround the citadel. The Mamelukes were caught unprepared and unarmed. Orders were immediately given to shoot them down, and close upon five hundred of their leading men were then and there done to death. Immediately upon the restoration of order in Cairo, messengers were sent to the governors of the principal towns conveying the news of the massacre, and carrying commands to seize and kill all the Mamelukes within reach. Nowhere is success obeyed more promptly or more unflinchingly than in the East; and within a few days the Mamelukes, as a body, had ceased to exist.

The whole story of the rising and the massacre is so imperfectly recorded, so mixed up with legend, so distorted one way or another by popular passions and prejudices, that it is impossible to feel any certainty as to the exact course of events, though, till a comparatively recent date, there must have been many men still living in Egypt who could remember the fatal Ides of March, 1811, when the Mamelukes were swept off the face of the earth, and when Mahomet Ali was enabled to carry out a deed of violence, similar in character to the aspiration ascribed to Caligula, to the effect that he wished all Rome had only one neck, so that he might cut it off by a single stroke. But as to the details of this *coup d'état*, there is any amount of discrepancy.

The only proof I could ever find of the celebrated leap from the citadel of the one Mameluke, who is reported to have escaped from the massacre, is the fact that I, in common with all tourists, have seen the spot from which the leap is alleged to have been taken. I may also add that it seemed to me absolutely incredible that such a leap could have been taken by a mounted horseman without either horse or rider being killed by the fall. A very short residence in Egypt will convince any man of ordinary intelligence of the utter impossibility of believing anything which one has got to accept on hearsay. All that anybody can state with confidence is that Mahomet Ali effected the well-nigh wholesale destruction of the Mamelukes ; that the native population of Egypt regarded their destruction with genuine satisfaction; and that the massacre, whether just or unjust, whether effected as an act of State necessity or of personal ambition, relieved Egypt from perhaps the most cruel, unenlightened, and oppressive rule the country has ever been subjected to in the course of her long and varied experience of all descriptions of tyranny. It is not too much to say that the seeds of the present prosperity of Egypt were sown in the shambles of the citadel. One curious result of the massacre of the Mamelukes was that it led to the invasion, and ultimately to the annexation, of the Soudan. A number of the Mamelukes had taken refuge in Nubia. The year after the massacre Mahomet Ali resolved to break up this Mameluke settlement, and sent an army into

Nubia under his son Ibrahim, who captured the fortress of Ibreeim, which was then the headquarters of the Mamelukes, and forced them to seek safety further south at Dongola. Later on they were hunted out of their new city of refuge by a fresh Egyptian army under another son of Mahomet Ali, and only a handful succeeded in getting away to Sennaar, which in its turn was occupied by the Egyptian forces. The conquest of Nubia and Sennaar marks the first stage in the campaign, which ended in the annexation of the Soudan.

Mahomet Ali belongs to the category of empire makers, who can hardly be judged, either for good or evil, by the standards of ordinary humanity. If I even attempt to form any estimate of his character, it is because his policy, his traditions, his aspirations, and his ideas, have influenced in no small degree the character of his successors.

It would, in my opinion, be a mistake to regard him as a patriot, still less as a ruler, anxious to promote the happiness of his people. On a smaller stage he played the part of a Cæsar, or a Napoleon. From the day when he crushed the power of the Mamelukes, he began preparations with the view of seizing Egypt for himself and severing the ties which bound her to Turkey, an idea which there is some reason to suppose he entertained from the day when he was nominated Pasha by the Porte. The first step towards effecting the separation of Egypt from the Ottoman Empire was to make his Pashalik prosperous and

powerful. At his own cost, and by his own energy, he succeeded in raising and drilling a large Egyptian army, officered mainly by Turks and foreign adventurers, while he succeeded in allaying the suspicions of Constantinople by employing his troops in various campaigns, undertaken nominally in order to suppress insurrections in Arabia, the Morea, and elsewhere, against the rule of the Sultan. These campaigns enabled him to raise his troops to a condition of high efficiency by actual warfare. In Egypt itself he undoubtedly improved the condition of the people. The rule of one master, however autocratic and arbitrary, is as a rule less oppressive than that of an infinite number of masters, composed of a ruling caste, alien in race and language to the population whom they govern. Mahomet Ali was determined to be the absolute ruler of Egypt, and on this account he would not allow any other ruler to share his power; moreover, despot though he was, he had a certain egotistic love of order and regularity of administration. Mismanagement, oppression, and extravagance, in as far as they did not operate to his own advantage, were things instinctively distasteful to his mind. Thus, to a considerable extent, he protected his people against the exactions of his own subordinates. There is a story told of him, whether true or false, the mere existence of which, as a legend, throws a vivid light on his modes of government. On a visit he paid to Tantah, a fellah stopped him in the street, and begged a hearing. In accordance

with his wont, he allowed the petitioner to tell his story. Its substance was that the complainant had been over-taxed, robbed, bastinadoed, tortured, and reduced to beggary by the Governor of the town, because he was unable to pay over and over again taxes which the Governor had no right to impose, and for which, when paid, he refused to give any receipt. Mahomet Ali's only answer was to ask the applicant what his trade was. On being told that his trade was that of a baker, Mahomet bade him go and heat his oven. After a short absence, the Pasha returned on horseback, accompanied by the Governor, whose escort he had requested, as a mark of favour; and, then and there, he ordered his guards to place the Governor inside the oven, and have the doors closed upon him. Ghastly as the story reads, the punishment thus inflicted served its purpose. Every Pasha throughout Egypt learnt thereby that under the rule of the Albanian soldier of fortune there was a limit, beyond which they could not rob and oppress the fellaheen with impunity.

Another incident, whose authenticity is better vouched for, illustrates this aspect of Mahomet Ali's policy. There had been reports of discontent and disaffection in the Arab quarter of Cairo, and one evening a decree was issued, announcing that any one proved to have spoken disloyally of the Government, would be hung on the spot. It so happened that the British Consul had asked for an audience of the Viceroy on the day following the issue of the decree. According to

the custom of the time, the interview was fixed for a very early hour in the morning. On riding past the Esbekieh Gardens, which was then, and remained even within my own memory, a sort of no man's land, the Consul saw forty corpses hanging in rows by the road-side, with a label affixed to them, stating that their offence was that they had spoken evil of the Government. On arriving at the palace, the British representative expressed some surprise to his Highness at so many disaffected persons having been detected, convicted, and punished in so short a time. Mahomet Ali's explanation was, I am told, to the following effect:—

"I sent word last night to the head of the police, that he must hang forty persons by daybreak this morning, and told him to pick out two score of the biggest scoundrels he could think of in the slums of Cairo. I dare say they had spoken, or would have spoken, disrespectfully of the Government. If they did not, they are a good riddance; and, at any rate, we shall hear no more of any popular discontent under my rule."

In those days justice in Cairo was of the Jedburgh law order. Shortly after the establishment of the Overland Route, an English doctor, accompanied by his daughter, a girl of seventeen, passed through Cairo on his way homewards from India. Strolling about the town, they stopped on the Esbekieh, to look at a troop of dervishes who were going through their weird performances in the open air. The presence

of women, and especially of unveiled women, in any Mahometan place of worship, is always odious to the Moslem mind. If English ladies could only realize the manner in which their intrusion into mosques is resented and criticized, even at the present day, they would be less eager to gratify feminine curiosity by pushing their way into places where the mere fact of their presence jars upon the feelings of every follower of the Prophet. In the days of which I write, fanaticism was far more powerful and more prevalent in Cairo than it is nowadays. As our poor young countrywoman was staring at the gestures of the dervishes and listening to their harsh invocations of Allah el Allah, one of the band killed her on the spot with a dagger, which he plunged into her heart. News of the outrage spread rapidly throughout the city, and soon reached the ears of Mahomet Ali, who was in Cairo at the time. He forthwith rode down to the Esbekieh, escorted by his guard, ordered the dervishes to point out the member of their confraternity who had struck the blow, and had him hung then and there on the tree nearest to the site of the crime, leaving word that the body of the criminal should remain gibbeted till it rotted to pieces, as a warning to his subjects that he would not allow any stranger to be attacked or outraged within his dominions. Notwithstanding its harshness, there can, I think, be little doubt that the rule of Mahomet Ali was popular with the Egyptians. He was a ruler such as Orientals understand and appreciate.

His fits of barbaric cruelty, followed by moods of lavish generosity, his contempt for danger, his sublime indifference for any law other than that of his own will and pleasure, his unscrupulous disregard for the rights of others when they came into conflict with his own, his determination to inflict condign punishment on all offenders who attempted to wring money out of his subjects—as by so doing they violated his royal monopoly of exaction—all these things appealed to the Oriental mind, and gained for his memory a sentiment of mixed respect and fear such as none of his successors ever succeeded in obtaining.

For some twenty-five years after his arrival in Egypt, Mahomet Ali remained to outward seeming a faithful servant of the Ottoman Empire. During this period he had not only, as I have already mentioned, created a powerful army, but had developed the prosperity of his Pashalik, had crushed with unrelenting sternness every attempt to upset his authority, had secured alike the confidence of the Porte and that of Egypt, and had enlisted the services of a number of Europeans whom he employed in the military and civil administration of his adopted country. He was now practically the king of the Turkish province, and the first use he made of the power thus acquired was to employ it for the purpose of throwing off his allegiance to his titular Sovereign. He virtually declared war against Turkey in 1831 by invading Syria and annexing it to Egypt. What his ultimate ambitions may have been it is impossible to say. According to

common reports, he contemplated the occupation of Constantinople, and aspired either to depose the Sultan and declare himself the Commander of the Faithful, or, what seems in itself more probable, to assume the position of a Turkish Mayor of the Palace. His armies, led by his son Ibrahim, were advancing towards the Bosphorus when their advance was stopped by Russia, who sent troops to occupy Constantinople. A temporary truce was established, in virtue of which Syria remained for the time being a province of Egypt. The necessity of upholding the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was at this period accepted as the guiding principle of European statecraft; and all the leading powers of Europe, with the exception of France, held that the success of Mahomet Ali, in his attack on Turkey, would be prejudicial to their own interests. France, however, under the rule of Louis Philippe, espoused the cause of the rebellious Pasha, and rendered him all the assistance in her power short of armed intervention in his behalf. In the coalition which ultimately led to the restoration of Turkish rule in Syria, England played the leading part. British troops and British men-of-war assisted at the bombardment of Beyrout and the capture of Acre, and thereby knocked on the head the ambition of Mahomet Ali to become the real, if not the nominal, ruler of the Ottoman Empire. Finally, in 1841, a treaty of peace was made between Egypt and Turkey, in virtue of which Syria was evacuated by the Egyptian armies, while Turkey, on the other hand, though retaining

her sovereign rights over Egypt as a Turkish province, or, in simpler words, accepting the payment of tribute as a sign of suzerainty, agreed to recognize the claim of Mahomet Ali to the title of Viceroy of Egypt, and to grant the right of succession to the Vice-regal throne to his lawful heirs.

The net result of this compromise was that France regarded herself, and was regarded in Egypt, as the protector of the Vice-regal dynasty, while England was considered the special champion of Turkish suzerainty. This impression, whether true or false, had, and still has, a considerable influence on the course of events in Egypt. At the period when Mahomet Ali attained his lifelong ambition by being recognized as the hereditary ruler of Egypt, he was well over seventy, an age far older in the East than it is in the West. He never quite recovered the disappointment of his second aspiration, that of extending his dominions in Asia Minor till he had attained a position from which he could dictate terms to Turkey. He lived on for some years, soured and broken-hearted. He abdicated in 1848 in favour of his son Ibrahim, but resumed his Vice-royalty on the death of Ibrahim two months after his accession to the throne. The death of his eldest son was the crowning blow in the series of disappointments which embittered the last days of Mahomet Ali's life. Ibrahim was a man after his own heart, fearless, unscrupulous, masterful, fitted to complete the edifice of which his father had laid the foundations. That edifice may be briefly described as

an Egypt rendered independent of Turkey, an Egypt deprived by death, exile or confiscation of any element strong enough to shackle the supreme authority of the Viceroys, an Egypt enslaved but enjoying internal order and tranquillity, an Egypt whose vast natural resources were to be developed by the introduction of an European element, but whose development was to enrich the coffers, not of the people, but of their Lord and Master. The saying of Louis XIV. of France, *L'Etat c'est moi*, would have expressed faithfully Mahomet Ali's conception of the policy he had carried out so successfully and so ruthlessly during his reign, first as a Turkish Pasha, and then as an hereditary Viceroy. The State, being in his view identical with himself, it was his interest to see the State well administered, though any direct profit, arising from good administration, was to be employed for his own enrichment and aggrandizement. By character, by temperament, and by experience, Ibrahim was well qualified to carry on the policy of Mahomet Ali. But before his death, Ibrahim had become subject to fits of insanity. He was the victim of insomnia, unable, as he is reported to have said himself, to sleep at night, because in his dreams he was haunted by the ghosts of the men he had done to death. So, by a sort of Nemesis, the dying days of Mahomet Ali were troubled by the reflection that his power must pass into hands unfit to rule. In the Club at Alexandria there hangs a picture of the founder of the reigning dynasty, who, whether as a matter of policy or of

choice, always favoured Alexandria as compared with Cairo, and who, from whatever motive, had used his authority to protect the interests of the Levantine community residing then, as now, for the most part, in the commercial—not in the political—capital of Egypt. The picture has no great artistic merit, but it pourtrays faithfully enough the gaunt, powerful frame, the rugged gray beard, the shaggy eyebrows, the bronzed, wrinkled face, the deep-set eyes, the stern, massive chin, the strong, hairy hands of the old Viceroy. Looking at it, one finds no difficulty in understanding why the name given to him by his contemporaries was that of the Lion of the Levant. In 1849 he was gathered to his fathers, and his son Abbas ruled in his stead.

THE REIGNS OF ABBAS AND SAID

Character of Abbas Pasha—Introduction of railways into Egypt—Story of Abbas' death at Benha—Accession of Said Pasha—Catastrophe of Kafr el Zahat—Issue of the first Egyptian loan.

By the law of Islam, Abbas, as the eldest male descendant of Mahomet Ali, succeeded to the throne, to the exclusion of Said, though the latter was a son of Mahomet Ali, while the former was only a grandson. Of Abbas' reign there is little to be said; certainly nothing that is good. He showed himself hostile to all the changes and reforms which his grandfather had introduced, was a fanatical Mahometan, and would have undone the work of his predecessor if he had not been too slothful to concern himself seriously with State affairs. It should, however, be recorded to his credit that under his reign, railways were first introduced into Egypt. The construction of the line between Alexandria and Cairo was entrusted to Robert Stephenson, who contracted not only to lay the roadway, but to supply all the rolling-stock. The line was commenced in 1852, and finished in 1856. It is worthy of note that Egypt should have taken the lead in railways, not only as compared with Turkey,

but with most of the countries in the Continent of Europe, and that this the first of Oriental railways should have been made by British hands.

The real, it might be said the sole, occupation of Abbas' life was the indulgence in gross debauchery, which outraged even the low standard of Egyptian morality at the period of which I speak. Happily for himself and the country over which he ruled, his reign, after lasting five years, was brought to an abrupt end by his sudden death when on a visit to the town of Benha. The common version of his death was that he was strangled by two of his eunuchs while sleeping on a divan in the harem. All sorts of rumours were current as to the cause of his assassination. Some said that it was due to the jealousy of a deposed favourite; others alleged that it was brought about by the action of relatives, desirous, either through greed or fear, to effect his removal from the Vice-regal throne; others again declared that his death had been dictated by motives of State policy. All that was ever known was that his death was kept secret for some days, and that his corpse was removed from Benha to his palace at the Abassieh near Cairo, the troops, who composed the Vice-regal body-guard, being under the impression that they were escorting a living Sovereign to his home. No inquests are held in the East, and the entrance of the police into any Moslem house, more especially that of a Prince or Pasha, is attended with the gravest difficulties. Whether the real authors of the crime were ever

discovered, or whether, if discovered, they were tried and punished, was never clearly known. The palace was never occupied again, and has since been pulled down. If I am not mistaken, its site is now covered by the cavalry barracks of the British army of occupation. Said, having become by Abbas' death the eldest of Mahomet Ali's living descendants, succeeded to the throne. He was, so those who knew him declare, a man of kindly disposition and good intentions, but he had neither the health nor the energy to leave any lasting impress on the condition of Egypt during his brief and uneventful reign. Indeed, the incidents of Said's vice-royalty which have survived in public memory are singularly few. There are only three to which allusion is necessary. The first is the railway catastrophe which befell the Vice-regal family shortly after the commencement of the new reign. In accordance with Oriental usage, a grand entertainment was to be given at Cairo in honour of Said's accession, and to this entertainment all the members of the Khedivial family were invited by Vice-regal command. The railroad from Alexandria to Cairo had not long been completed, and, as most of the Viceroy's relatives resided in, or near, Alexandria, a special train had been provided for their transport to the capital. It is a common story that Ismail Pasha, who was Said's heir-apparent, received a message from his mother at Cairo, advising him most urgently to find some pretext for not accepting the invitation. Be this as it may, Ismail, owing to a

sudden and perhaps opportune attack of illness, did not avail himself of the invitation. The train, containing some four-score members of the Vice-regal family, set out in due course, travelling at express speed. At Kafr el Zahat the Nile is crossed by an iron bridge, constructed, I believe, by Messrs. Brassey, Peto and Betts. In order to enable sailing-vessels to pass under the viaduct, it is provided with a swing-bridge in its centre, which can be swung backward and forward. By some inexplicable oversight, this swing-bridge had been opened shortly before the arrival of the Vice-regal train in order to allow a dahabeah to pass, and had not been closed before the train reached the bridge. The result was that the train fell headlong into the Nile, and that the majority of its passengers were drowned. In a country such as Egypt, a catastrophe of this kind was certain, with or without reason, to be attributed to design rather than accident. I doubt whether anybody now alive knows, or is ever likely to know, what the truth was about this catastrophe. All I can say is that many years later, I saw a great deal of the official who had been station-master at Kafr el Zahat at the time the catastrophe occurred, and who had subsequently become a minister under Ismail Pasha. He was one of the best educated, most enlightened and liberal-minded Turks it has been my fortune to meet, and, I should say, the last person to be an accomplice in a crime. But in the East, even more than elsewhere, one never knows.

The second incident to which I would allude, is the fact that in Said's lifetime Egypt commenced the system of borrowing from Europe, which led to her virtual bankruptcy. In 1862 Said Pasha, with the sanction of the Sublime Porte, contracted a loan of £1,200,000 with the Bank of Saxe-Meiningen, repayable in thirty years, and bearing interest at 7 per cent. The security was deemed excellent, and the loan, which was issued in London by the firm of Frühling and Goschen, as the agents of the bank in question, was subscribed five times over. On the loan being issued, the representative of the bank at Cairo called to inform the Viceroy of the success with which the issue had been attended. Said's reported reply was eminently characteristic of an Oriental potentate: "If fifteen millions have been subscribed, why not take them all? It would be such a pity to disappoint anybody."

The third, and by far the most important, incident of Said's reign is that he granted to Ferdinand de Lesseps the concession for constructing a canal across the Isthmus of Suez. But this concession has had, and still has, such an immense influence on the fortunes of Egypt and the Khedivate, that I had better reserve the subject for another chapter.

THE SUEZ CANAL

Ferdinand de Lesseps' connection with Egypt—British opposition to the Suez Canal—M. de Lesseps' character—Concession granted by Said Pasha—The Porte refuses to sanction concession as originally proposed—Financial difficulties of construction—Corvée system forbidden—Award of Napoleon III.—Unfairness of award.

AMONGST the Frenchmen who drifted into Egypt during the reign of Said Pasha was Ferdinand de Lesseps. It is no discredit to him to say that he came there in search of employment. His father had been French Consul at Smyrna, and he himself had held a sort of semi-diplomatic position at Rome when the Second French Republic sent an armed expedition under Marshal Oudinot to besiege the Eternal City and to restore the temporal power of the Papacy. He must at the commencement of his active Egyptian career have been a man close upon fifty, who had led a chequered life in many lands, and who, after the wont of rolling stones, had gathered but little moss. With a bright, handsome face, a pleasant smile, an air of genial *bonhomie*, and a singularly plausible manner, he speedily became a favourite in Egyptian court circles, and contracted a close intimacy with Said. It was, I believe, some little time before de Lesseps' arrival in Egypt that the

Prince-President overthrew the Republic in France by the *coup d'état* of the 2nd of December, and established himself upon the throne as Napoleon III. Under the Empire France continued the policy pursued by the monarchy of July, and claimed, in virtue of the indirect support she had given to the Viceroy in his contest with Turkey, to be considered the special protectress of the dynasty founded by Mahomet Ali. The scheme for connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea by cutting a ship canal through the Isthmus of Suez was then, so to speak, in the air. It was matter of history that at not a very remote period a waterway had existed by which vessels of small burden had been conveyed from one sea to the other. But it is only fair to say, that though M. de Lesseps did not originate the idea of the Suez Canal, he was the first person to embody this idea in a practical form. It seems strange, looking back on the past with our present experience, that anybody should ever have seriously questioned the feasibility of the project. To dig a trench of some eighty miles in length through the soft sand of the desert, lying between Egypt and the Holy Land, would hardly be regarded nowadays as an enterprise offering any formidable difficulty. But at the time when the project was first broached, it encountered the most bitter and widespread opposition. The only serious arguments I ever heard adduced to show that the scheme could never be carried into execution was that the sand walls of the Canal would be washed

away in no time by the action of the water, especially if, as was commonly imagined, the level of the Red Sea waters was materially lower than that of the Mediterranean, and that therefore there would always be a strong current through the Canal. It was asserted that, as the walls crumbled away, the sand of which they were formed would sink to the bed of the trench and cause it to silt up. This view, I am bound to admit, was espoused by the leading English engineers of the day, with the well-nigh solitary exception of Sir John Hawkshaw. In Egypt the common belief was that, even if the Canal could be constructed, this could only be done at an enormous cost, and that, supposing it was done, the traffic through the Canal would be insufficient to pay any substantial interest on the cost of its construction. The opposition to the canal scheme had its headquarters in England, who used her then predominant influence at Constantinople to induce the Sultan, as Suzerain of Egypt, to discountenance the project.

It is the fashion nowadays to represent our opposition to the construction of the Suez Canal as proof of the narrowmindedness of our commercial classes, and as evidence of the lack of statesmanship of our rulers half a century ago. To me this attempt to prove that we are wiser than our fathers has always seemed to rest upon very shallow foundation. You have only to look at the pamphlets and newspapers of the period to see that the piercing of the isthmus was desired on the one hand and deprecated on the

other, upon the ground, that the undertaking, if it proved successful, was deemed likely to deal a death-blow to the commercial supremacy of England. Because the republic of Venice had been deprived of her caravan traffic with the Far East, owing to the discovery of the Cape route to India, it was deemed to be certain that England would lose her trade with the kingdoms of Cathay if ever a ship canal was opened between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. In this case, Marseilles and Genoa would become, it was thought, the natural ports for merchandise passing to and fro between Europe and the Far East. This expectation has been disappointed for the time, owing to the extraordinary energy and enterprise of the British manufacturers and shipowners, who, as soon as the Canal was shown to be the shortest route for the East, availed themselves of its advantages in such a manner as to supply three-fourths at least of the tonnage which passes by the Canal. How long this state of things can endure, how long a vast mass of the world's produce will continue to be brought to the British islands, manufactured there by British industry, and then exported again in manufactured form to every quarter of the globe, is a question to which it is very difficult to supply an answer. This much, however, may be said, that if ever the time should come when the historians of the future may be called upon to explain the story of the decline and fall of British commerce, one of the explanations which will be offered will undoubtedly be the revolution

in the fundamental conditions of trade caused by the Suez Canal. I fail, therefore, to understand why our countrymen should be accused of any exceptional ignorance or selfishness, because they were hostile to M. de Lesseps' project. No doubt they laid themselves open to a certain amount of ridicule by the persistency with which, up to the very last, they declared that the Canal never could be made, or, if made, would prove a gigantic failure; but in so doing, they only followed the instinct of Englishmen, which leads them to believe that anything they do not wish to happen is never likely to happen—an instinct which, though it may prove dangerous at times, is also one of the main causes of our national success.

From a political point of view, the attitude of the British Government of the day towards the Canal is also capable of defence. From the time when the overland route was initiated by Lieutenant Waghorn—one of the countless pioneers of the British Empire who have devoted their lives to its service and received little or no reward for their exertions on its behalf—Egypt had become our highway to India. The importance of rapid communication *viâ* Egypt with our Eastern possessions was even more important then, when telegraphy was still in its infancy, than it is to-day. It was therefore a matter of vital interest to England that no European Power should have the control of Egypt. The Suez Canal, if it had been constructed on the terms of the original concession, would have given France a footing in Egypt

which would have made her all-powerful at Cairo. This being so, I fail to see why Lord Palmerston should be held up to obloquy, because he did everything in his power to hinder, or, at any rate to retard, the completion of the Canal. It was his duty, as a British statesman, to protect the interests of England. He knew of no other rule of conduct for an Englishman holding his position; and I, for my part, venture to doubt whether there is any rule that is better. There is a story, whose authenticity I have never been able to ascertain, that on some occasion when he was asked why he opposed the canal, he answered: "Because, if the Canal is made, England will have to annex Egypt; and I, for one, have no wish to see Egypt added to the British Empire." If the story is true, it seems, I think, to place Lord Palmerston's antagonism to the Canal under a much more favourable light than that in which it is commonly represented, not only by foreigners, but by his fellow-countrymen.

Still, though it is unreasonable to attribute England's endeavour to thwart the construction of the canal to blind ignorance or personal jealousy, there can be no doubt that English antagonism formed not the least of the many obstacles with which the promoters of the scheme had to contend. As I have stated already, I do not see any cause to credit M. de Lesseps with being the author of the idea of connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean by a waterway available for deep-sea vessels. He was not the discoverer of the Isthmus route in anything approaching

the sense in which Columbus is described as the discoverer of America; on the other hand, he is not unjustly described as the creator of the Canal. I doubt, as later events proved only too fully, his having had any special engineering capacity or his having taken any leading part in the actual carrying out of the great work with which his name is permanently and justly identified. I have heard him often repeat a story of how the way to make the Suez Canal first presented itself to his mind when he was walking on the sands of some seaside bathing-place—the exact locality mentioned was not always the same—and noticed the fact that while dry sand crumbled under his feet, wet sand bore the weight of his body without any serious depression. But beyond this somewhat elementary contribution, his conversation added but little to one's knowledge of the story of the canal's construction. This part of the undertaking was left to his subordinates. But all the ability and zeal displayed by his fellow-workers would not have been of much avail without the exuberant energy of M. de Lesseps. He, if not the master mind, was the motive power in the whole enterprise. His extraordinary self-confidence, his indomitable cheerfulness, his absolute determination to carry out the undertaking to which he had devoted himself, his courage, tact, good-humour, adaptability of character, and force of will, amounted almost, if not quite, to genius. No doubt the Suez Canal would have been made sooner or later by somebody. But it would not

have been made till many years later, and under conditions very different from those under which it came into existence, supposing the undertaking had been controlled by any other man than Ferdinand de Lesseps.

M. de Lesseps was in France at the time of the death of Abbas Pasha in July, 1854. Within an hour of his receiving the news, as he himself has told me, he was on his way to Egypt to claim from the new Viceroy, in virtue of an old promise, the grant of a concession for the construction of a ship canal across the Isthmus of Suez, if ever he came to the throne. M. de Lesseps might have said with Cæsar, *Veni vidi vixi*, when he returned to France with the concession in his pocket. He then proceeded to Paris and formed a French Company for the construction of the canal. Here, however, his difficulties commenced. A question was raised at Constantinople as to how far the Egyptian Government, under the treaty of 1841, was authorized to cede land forming part and parcel of the Ottoman dominions without the consent of the suzerain Power. The Sultan, at the instigation of the British Government, refused to approve the concession on the grounds that, by its terms, a foreign company was entitled to erect forts in order to protect the entrance to the canal at Port Said and Suez, to occupy the banks with troops under its own command, and to exercise authority over a strip of land, of about a kilometre in breadth, on either side of the canal. It was argued that those stipulations

constituted an infraction of the rights of the Sultan as Suzerain of Egypt. The stipulations in question had to be abandoned, and the sanction of the Porte was at length obtained. Russia, France, and Austria agreed to offer no opposition to the construction of the Canal. England, however, declined to give her approval, though no overt opposition was offered by her to the practical prosecution of the enterprise during the life-time of Said. In January, 1863, however, Ismail Pasha became Viceroy, and upon his accession the Canal Company ceased to enjoy the personal favour it had received from his predecessor.

The story of the construction of the Canal and that of the Khedivate are too closely connected to be completely independent of each other. It will therefore make my narrative clearer if, in defiance of strict chronological order, I say here what I have to say concerning the Canal up to the date of its completion, though this completion did not take place till six years after Ismail had succeeded Said on the Vice-regal throne. By the terms of the original concession, Said had agreed to supply the manual labour, required for the construction of the canal, free of any charge to the Company. He also engaged to subscribe £4,000,000 of shares of the Suez Canal Company, payable in fifteen instalments at intervals of a year, the total capital of the Company being £16,000,000. In as far as I could ever arrive at any clear understanding of the complicated and irregular negotiations which preceded the formation of the Company, these shares

were taken in the name of M. de Lesseps on account of Said Pasha, it being understood between him and the Viceroy that they were to be transferred to the latter on paying the calls in due course. Upon Said Pasha's death, a question arose as to how far the calls then due on allotment constituted a liability on Said's private estate, or upon the nominal holder. Without expressing any opinion on a moot point of law, it is obvious that if the liability in question had been seriously disputed by Said's successor, the Suez Canal Company and M. de Lesseps would have been placed in a position of extreme difficulty. Ismail was anxious to deprive the Company of certain privileges granted by the Said concession, which in his opinion militated against his own supremacy as the Lord Paramount of Egypt. At the same time he was very reluctant to do anything which might prevent or retard the completion of the Canal, and thereby expose him to the hostility of France and of the Imperial Court, both of whom had taken M. de Lesseps' scheme under their protection. In order, therefore, to disarm the opposition of M. de Lesseps to the proposed modifications of the original contract, Ismail volunteered of his own accord, not only to take over the whole liabilities of his predecessor in respect of his allotment of shares, but to forego the arrangement under which the calls were to be paid in fifteen successive years, and to hold the shares on the same footing as any ordinary shares. Thereby he acknowledged his liability to pay any calls that might be made by the Company. The

Suez Canal could hardly have been constructed in its present form but for the financial support thus given it at the cost of Egypt, a fact which French publicists have always been unwilling to admit. In Egypt, until the end of Ismail's reign, all public works in Egypt were carried out by forced labour. The corvée system is almost indispensable in a country whose prosperity, if not whose existence, depends upon the maintenance in good order of the dykes and canals which secure its irrigation. Labour forthcoming at an hour's notice is absolutely necessary to keep the country from the risk of being overflooded or deprived of water by any injury to the vast network of canals fed by the Nile; and such labour can only be secured by the local authorities having power to call on the services of the fellaheen in case of a dam bursting, or a bank being undermined by the action of the current. Such occurrences were far more frequent then than they are at present. The system of the corvée was liable to abuse, and, as a matter of fact, was habitually and grossly abused. But it never was so signally abused as it was in the case of the Suez Canal. By the terms of the concession, Egypt did not receive any benefit, direct or indirect, from the construction of the Canal. The concessionaries may have imagined that Said would pay for the labour he had agreed to supply. If they did so imagine, they displayed an almost infantile ignorance of the ways in which things were then managed in Egypt. The Moudirs of the various provinces

received orders to furnish a certain tale of labourers. These orders were transmitted to the sheiks of the province, and from every village in Egypt a number of wretched fellahs were taken from their homes and despatched under military guards to the isthmus of Suez, where they were compelled to work in gangs, under local overseers armed with the kurbash. Twenty-five thousand men formed the tale of labourers demanded by the Company. These labourers received no pay whatever. The rations supplied them were of a very meagre description. What with bad food, poor clothing, the heat by day and the cold by night, overwork and misery, they died like sheep. The places made vacant on the labour roll by death or disease had to be constantly filled up by fresh drafts of fellahs; and if the contract had been carried out in its integrity, it is hardly too much to say that the population of Egypt would have been seriously diminished. The matter became a public scandal even in a country where the fellaheen had for years immemorial been looked upon as beasts of burden; and naturally enough the scandal was made the most of by the opponents of the Canal. Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister at the time; and, apart from his very genuine British hatred of slavery in any form, I have little doubt he was influenced by his political antagonism to the extension of French influence in Egypt, certain to accrue to her through the successful completion of the Canal. By his instructions, our ambassador at Constantinople protested to the Porte against the employment of forced labour on

Turkish territory for the benefit of a foreign Company. The Sultan acceded to the views of our representative; and on receiving a missive from his Suzerain, Ismail, who for reasons, of which I shall speak shortly, was very anxious to give no umbrage to the Porte, refused to continue the supply of unpaid, compulsory labour. The decision might easily have proved fatal to the enterprise. The calculations of the Company were all based on the hypothesis that the *main d'œuvre* was to be provided free of cost by Egypt. The work was not far enough advanced to remove the doubts which were popularly entertained as to the feasibility of the project, and the borrowing powers of the Company were pretty well exhausted. M. de Lesseps saved the situation. He had some remote connection with the Empress Eugenie on her mother's side. On the strength of this, and still more, by reason of his association with an enterprise which enlisted French sympathies, he had the ear of the Imperial Court. He represented the opposition of England to compulsory labour in Egypt as due simply to jealousy of France; he resorted to every kind of expedient to influence the French Government; he was supported by French diplomacy; and finally, such pressure was brought to bear on the Viceroy, that he consented to submit to arbitration the questions, whether the abolition of the corvée in respect of the construction of the Canal, constituted a breach of contract, and if so, what damages should be given as compensation, the arbitrator to be the Emperor Napoleon. His

Majesty placed the matter in the hands of a commission, composed of members of the Imperial Court, of whom the Duc de Persigny was the most important, assisted by eminent French legal authorities. The terms of their award exceeded the most sanguine hopes of the Company. Egypt was condemned to pay close upon £3,000,000 for breach of contract. How this award was obtained, and how M. de Lesseps contrived to finance the Company during its vicissitudes of fortune, are questions which gave rise to much hostile criticisms. Anybody who takes the trouble to examine the official report issued by the French Government concerning the mode in which the Panama Canal was financed by M. de Lesseps, will have little difficulty in forming an opinion as to the causes of the extravagant expenditure incurred in the case of the Canal of Suez. It is, however, common justice to say that, with respect both to the Canal which succeeded and the Canal that failed, there was no evidence whatever to show that M. de Lesseps appropriated to himself any undue share of the bonuses, distributed so lavishly in all quarters, which were considered likely to render valuable assistance in raising funds for the purpose of his enterprises. Whether the end justifies the means is a moot point, which in the great majority of instances is decided by the issue, whether the means succeed or not in accomplishing their end. That he was unscrupulous in his expedients, I have no doubt whatever, but it would take

a great deal to persuade me that he wilfully sacrificed the interests of those who had entrusted him with their money to personal or selfish purposes. At the same time no fair-minded person who studies the history of the formation of the Suez Canal Company, and of the mode in which its funds were provided, and its shares were allotted, can entertain any doubt that the management of its affairs under M. de Lesseps was characterized, to use the mildest expression, by the most extraordinary irregularity.

The award was of a very one-sided character. Let me cite one instance amongst many which illustrates the extraordinary character of its provisions. By the original concession the Company was entitled to the ownership of a strip of land on either side the Canal throughout its entire course. The breadth of the strip was about a kilometre, measured from the centre of the channel. Ismail, in deference to the instructions of the Sultan, had reduced the breadth of the land in question to sixty metres. In consequence, the Company undoubtedly lost its right to a considerable area of ground. This ground, however, was then, and for the most part still is, barren desert sand, absolutely valueless for the time being. For the land of which they were thus deprived —land, too, which had been given as a present—the Company was awarded the extravagant price of £20 per acre. Some years later, the Company required a portion of this land for building wharves along the banks, and applied to the Egyptian Government to

sell them a few acres close to Port Said. The Government proposed to re-sell at the price they had been called upon to pay under the award. The Company, however, treated the offer as absurd, on the plea that the land was absolutely worthless in itself, and finally paid for it only a small fraction of the price they had fixed themselves as its value, when they had been obliged to forego their title to its possession. Never yet, in as far as I am acquainted with financial history, has there been a concession granted, so profitable to the grantee, so costly to the grantor, as that given by Said Pasha to the Suez Canal Company.

Baedeker's handbook for Egypt, which is generally very accurate in its figures, estimates the cost of constructing the Canal at £19,000,000, of which amount £12,800,000 was paid by public subscription, £3,000,000 by the award, while the balance was provided by the Khedive. As, however, Ismail took over the £4,000,000 of shares allotted to Said Pasha, or rather to M. de Lesseps on Said's behalf, he practically contributed about one-half of the original capital.

He also, in order to facilitate a loan required to complete the Canal, agreed to forego for twenty-five years all interest on the above shares. It is very difficult to calculate the exact amount in actual cash Egypt lost by this transaction, but the fact remains that Ismail's liberality at the expense of Egypt enabled the Company to raise a very large sum of money it would have had extreme difficulty

in borrowing without his co-operation. It is not therefore unfair to assume that Egypt contributed not far short of one-half of the capital by which the canal was built. For this enormous subsidy, Egypt has never received, and will not receive for some sixty years to come, the slightest pecuniary benefit or return of any kind.

Within the last few months a case has been tried and decided before the International Courts at Cairo which throws considerable light on the early proceedings of the Canal Company, and which possesses a dramatic interest of its own. The salient points of the case are as follows :—

Amongst the victims of the Kafr el Zahat accident, to which I have already referred, was a certain Khaireddin Pasha, who had been a slave of Mahomet Ali, had been liberated by the Viceroy, and had subsequently amassed a considerable fortune. By the law of Islam, as he died intestate, his lawful heirs were the three sons of his former master, the then Viceroy Said, Prince Ibrahim, and Prince Mahomet Ali the younger. The heirs in question are all dead, and their legal representatives are their Highnesses the Prince Toussoun, the Prince Djemil, the Princess Amma Toussoun and the Princess Esmet Toussoun. The above members of the Vice-regal family brought an action last May against the Suez Canal Company, claiming that amongst the assets of Khaireddin Pasha at the time of his death in 1858 was one founder's share, and 250 ordinary shares in the Company. For

some reason or other, the fact of Khaireddin Pasha having been the owner of the shares in question had been overlooked or forgotten—a fact not so surprising as it may seem at first sight, considering that in 1858 the shares of the Company were hardly deemed worth the paper on which they were inscribed—while, owing probably to his sudden death, there was no inventory of his property found amidst his papers. At some period, however, subsequent to his death, it was discovered that in the concession which Said Pasha granted to M. de Lesseps for the construction of the Canal, Khaireddin was expressly named as one of the original promoters of the enterprise, and in this capacity was entitled to one whole founder's share and 250 ordinary shares, securities which at their present market price represent a very large sum of money. The plaintiffs therefore called upon the Company to hand over to them the shares belonging by rights to Khaireddin, or in the event of their not being in a position to do so, to pay the amount the shares would represent to-day in the open market. The Company could not contest the fact that Khaireddin was specially mentioned in the original list of founders drawn up in 1855, and that he took part in various meetings of the founders in the early days of the concession. The defendants, however, proved, through their counsel, that Khaireddin's name did not appear in a second list of founders drawn up in 1861, and as far as can be gathered from the report of the trial, they contended that the absence of his name

from the later list showed that some arrangement must have been come to with his heirs, by which they relinquished their claim to the shares. In itself the contention seems plausible enough. What militated against its acceptance was the fact that the Company were either unable or unwilling to furnish any written evidence from their own books in proof of any such arrangement having either been proposed or accepted. It is obvious, too, that the case of the defendants was seriously impaired by their reluctance to produce in court the two lists of founders, a reluctance which they attempted to justify by the extraordinary plea that the documents in dispute were the property of the Egyptian Government, and could not therefore be produced in a civil law suit. The only weighty plea brought forward for the defendants was that the claim of the plaintiffs was barred by prescription, and that, as all the personages engaged in the original transaction were dead, it was impossible to ascertain the facts of the case with any degree of certainty. The Court, however, decided that the plea of prescription was inadmissible, and gave judgment for the plaintiffs in as far as their interest in the founder's share assigned to Khaireddin Pasha was concerned, and for the defendants in respect of their liability for the 250 ordinary shares he might have been entitled to. The Court, which is one of first instance, also decided that the defendants might appeal against the judgment, but only on condition of their producing, within three months, the original list

of the founders of 1855, as well as the second list of 1861.

Altogether, the more the story of the Suez Canal is studied, the less it redounds to the credit of its promoters. Still, it is impossible not to make a distinction between Ferdinand de Lesseps and his financial colleagues. An intense belief in himself was the dominant feature of his character, and the overwhelming confidence which led to his brilliant success in the Isthmus of Suez, led equally to his lamentable failure in the Isthmus of Panama. The greatness assigned to him by his fellow-countrymen in the days of his success was as little deserved as the obloquy passed upon him in the days of his failure. Personally, my recollections of him are of the kindliest nature. I spent three very pleasant days with him in his villa at Ismailia, shortly before the opening of the canal, and after doing so, I found it easy to understand the fascination he exercised over almost everybody who came into contact with him. He was then a man of well over sixty, with a spare, active figure, clear-cut features, snow-white hair and moustache, and a bronzed complexion. He had just got engaged to a singularly attractive young lady, who might well have been his granddaughter. The future bride and her parents were then staying with him on a visit; and I think everybody will admit that there are few positions in life more difficult to fill with dignity than that of an elderly swain courting a young and pretty bride.

But M. de Lesseps succeeded where anybody else would have failed; and, apart from his fame, it seemed no improbable supposition that the marriage on both sides was at the time one of genuine affection. A suitor so bright, a manner so charming, a look of such intense vitality, may well have captivated the fancy of a young girl. All day long and every day he was hard at work making arrangements for the opening, interrupted at every moment, pestered by callers, deluged with letters and telegrams; and yet he found time to ride in the desert, to entertain his visitors, and to make love to his sweetheart. He talked very frankly and good-humouredly of the difficulties he had encountered and surmounted in the course of his career, and made no secret of the extent to which he and his Company had profited by the blind dislike of England, so prevalent then as now throughout the Continent, especially in France. He was fond of telling a story, how he once received a letter from a Frenchman in some out-of-the-way part of the world, enclosing an application for shares in his tunnel through Sweden. He declined to accept the money accompanying the application, on the ground that his Company was not making a tunnel, but a canal, and that the scene of their operations was not Sweden, but Egypt. In reply, his correspondent wrote to say his application held good, as it was a matter of absolute indifference to him what the project was or where it was located, *Pourvu que ça embête les Anglais.* How far he shared this sentiment

himself, I am by no means certain. He had many personal English friends, and, as a man of the world, had very few prejudices. The only occasion on which I ever heard him say anything which seemed to display a latent ill-will to England was on his return from the United States, whither he had made a journey in the hope of inducing the American public to take up the Panama scheme, then at the outset of its financial difficulties. In answer to a question on my part as to the reception he had met with across the Atlantic, his answer was, "*Mon chér, les Americains, sont vos vrais cousins.*"

With these digressions, which will, I think, render my story more easily intelligible to persons not acquainted with recent Egyptian history, previous to the date when England became intimately associated with Egypt, first financially, and then politically, I pass on to the main subject of my narrative.

THE ACCESSION OF ISMAIL PASHA

State of Egypt on commencement of Ismail's reign—Personal character of new Viceroy—Temptations to which he was subjected—The cotton boom during the Secession War.

It was on the 18th of January, 1863, that Ismail ascended the Vice-regal throne, being then a man of thirty-two. It may be well to recapitulate briefly what was the political condition of Egypt at the commencement of this new and momentous reign. Under the rule of Mahomet Ali and his successors, every element which could offer any resistance to the absolute authority of the Sovereign had been ruthlessly swept away. I fully admit that the Mameluke chieftains, who constituted an influence independent of, and often hostile to, that of the Pasha representing the suzerain Power, had used their authority to harass and oppress the native populations subject to their jurisdiction. In itself the overthrow of the Mamelukes was a boon to Egypt. Nevertheless, the fact that the whole administration of the country was now placed in one single hand, rendered possible a system of universal oppression which was not possible so long as the authority of the Mamelukes acted as a

counterpoise to the absolute will of the Viceroy. No doubt the liberal treatment of foreigners resident in Egypt, which formed part of Mahomet Ali's permanent policy, had created an important foreign element which lay outside the jurisdiction of the Vice-regal government, and which, under conceivable conditions, might have served as a restraint upon the despotic rule of the Viceroy. As it happened, however, the European community in Egypt were in favour of the autocratic rule, under which order and tranquillity had been established throughout the valley of the Nile, and were practically indifferent to any exactions and oppressions to which the native population was subjected, so long as their own interests were completely secured and protected under the capitulations. The centralized system of government, introduced after the destruction of the Mamelukes, placed the native population, or, in other words, the peasant farmers, known by the name of fellaheen, absolutely at the mercy of the Effendina, their sole lord and master. As I have stated previously, the founder of this system had no idea of allowing anybody but himself and his dependents to enrich themselves at the expense of the fellaheen ; but this idea was not due to any regard for the welfare of the cultivators of the soil except in as far as their comparative immunity from local oppression rendered their labour more profitable to his own interests. Under the reign of Mahomet Ali the fellahs were deported wholesale from their homes and were compelled to perform military service for years

without any adequate remuneration. The lands of private individuals were confiscated in exchange for annuities, whose amount was fixed by the Government. These annuities were irregularly paid, and in any case were to terminate with the life of the annuitant. The Wakf lands, belonging to the Mosques, were taken possession of by the State, or, in other words, by the Viceroy. The taxes were raised to the highest point, consistent with the cultivators of the soil being left sufficient to provide the necessities of existence. No doubt the Mahmoudieh Canal and the many other improvements introduced during Mahomet Ali's reign, improvements which were all paid for by the contributions of the fellaheen, either in forced labour or in money, increased the productive fertility of Egypt. But the profit derived from these improvements benefited the tax-imposer rather than the tax-payer. Amidst the fellaheen, the general sentiment of the time in respect of the rule of the Mamelukes and of Mahomet Ali was, to paraphrase the saying of Rehoboam to the children of Israel, "that while the former had scourged them with whips, the latter had scourged them with scorpions." During the reigns of Abbas and Said the system of government remained the same in theory, though its execution was somewhat alleviated in practice by the coarse debauchery of the one, and the ill-health, as well as the indolence, of the other. Thus, when Ismail succeeded to the throne, the theory of Egyptian government—if such a thing as theory can be said to exist—was that the Viceroy had

absolute power to dispose of the lives and properties of his subjects. This view was naturally enough adopted by the Effendina the Lord and Master: what is more strange, is that it was readily accepted by the people over whom he held supreme power. The existence of this popular belief in the divine right of the Effendina to rule as he thought fit, must fairly be borne in mind by any one who attempts to sit in judgment on the conduct of the first and greatest of the Khedives.

The accession of Ismail Pasha was regarded in his own country, but still more abroad, as the advent of a new and a better era for Egypt. He was deemed, and rightly deemed, to be a man of exceptional ability, he was understood to possess unusual ability as an administrator; he was reported to entertain a high appreciation of Western civilization, and to be wishful of introducing European reforms into Egypt, in as far as their introduction was consistent with Oriental ideas. In Egypt, the notion of his, or of any other native ruler, being either a philanthropist or an humanitarian, would have been scouted then as a flagrant absurdity. But subject to this limitation, I am inclined to think the character assigned to Ismail Pasha abroad, at the period when he first attracted European attention, was not altogether undeserved. His theory of government was that of Louis the XIVth, "I am the State." He had, however, sufficient intelligence to realize that it was for his own interest the State should be sufficiently

well administered to promote its productiveness. Moreover, though he was prepared to sacrifice anything, and anybody, to his own aggrandizement and enrichment, he was good-humoured, if not good-natured, and was free from the lust of cruelty so common amidst Oriental rulers. He had picked up a sort of European veneer. He believed himself, not altogether without cause, to be greatly superior in intelligence to the run of Oriental princes. He affected the society of foreigners. He spoke French fluently, though inaccurately; he could, though with difficulty, make himself understood in English. He was desirous, not only as a matter of policy, but of individual predilection, to stand well in the public opinion of Europe; and all these motives confirmed his wish to earn the repute of an enlightened Sovereign, whose rule, however autocratic, was directed to the development and improvement of the country over which he had been called to reign. In an able summary of Egyptian history, published in England as late as 1877, the character of Ismail Pasha is thus summed up:

"A man of undoubted ability, possessed of unusual energy in administration, fully appreciative of the importance of Western civilization, fired with the ambition proper to the grandson of Mahomet Ali, the Khedive is a ruler such as Egypt has scarcely seen since the Arab conquest."

I confess it is difficult for me to comprehend that this estimate could have been formed as late as the year following the Cave Mission. But if it had been

written in 1869, the year of the opening of the Suez Canal, I think its justice would have been endorsed by most foreigners conversant with Egyptian affairs.

If his subsequent career belied the promise of the earlier years of his reign, great excuses must, in common justice, be made for Ismail. Unlimited power is well-nigh sufficient to ruin the highest nature; but when unlimited power is combined with unlimited wealth, rapid deterioration is a matter of absolute certainty. No partisan of Ismail can say much more in his favour than that he wished well towards Egypt, as the instrument of his own aggrandizement. But good wishes of such a kind, however genuine, are insufficient to stand against the temptation of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. The success of Said Pasha's loan, to which I have referred above, proved the ruin of Ismail Pasha, and almost the ruin of Egypt. From the outset of his reign Ismail entertained a variety of ambitions, some creditable, some otherwise, but all of which had this feature in common, that their achievement was only possible by lavish expenditure, carried to an extent utterly surpassing the normal revenues of Egypt. It is, to say the least, conceivable that, if Ismail had realized that the policy he intended to pursue must necessitate a drain on the resources of Egypt, which the country was quite unable to support, he might have foregone, or at any rate restricted, its execution. But the experience of Said's reign had

led Ismail to believe that Europe was prepared to grant him an unlimited credit. He possessed a sort of superficial financial ability, which, in public as well as private affairs, is certain to lead its owner into difficulties. He was surrounded by native and foreign capitalists, who all vied with one another in their assurances that they were prepared to advance him any funds he might require, and that there would be no difficulty about renewing the loans effected for his behalf on the credit of Egypt. These assurances were not altogether fallacious. The credit of Egypt as a borrower stood then exceptionally high on the Stock Exchange of Europe. The period of Ismail's accession coincided with the abolition of slavery in the United States during the Secession War; and, owing to the cessation of cotton supplies from the Southern States, the price of Egyptian cotton rose by leaps and bounds. Those amongst my readers whose memories go back to the days of the Secession War, cannot fail to recall how universal was the belief in England. in 1863, that the Civil War in America would go on for an indefinite period, and could only terminate, if at all, in the complete destruction of the cotton industry in America.

Just about this period, I, having recently returned from America, had the honour of an interview with Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, under Lord Palmerston's second Ministry, and in the course of our conversation was assured by him that the recognition of the Confederate States was agreed

upon in principle by the British Government, and that its proclamation was a mere question of time. If such views were held in England, it was natural enough they should be entertained in Egypt. The valley of the Nile, it was believed, was in future to supply the looms of Lancashire with the staple of their trade. So long as the boom lasted, every owner of cotton land was earning profits unheard of hitherto. The area of cotton cultivation was increased in all parts of the country. Fortunes were made rapidly and spent recklessly; yet there was some show of reason for the prevalent belief that the resources of Egypt were practically inexhaustible. Nowhere was this belief stronger than amidst Ismail's own entourage; and he was therefore not unnaturally encouraged in the delusion that he could contract any liabilities he liked without fear of encountering any difficulty in meeting these liabilities at maturity. The delusion was further strengthened by a vague idea that the Suez Canal would add indirectly to the prosperity of Egypt, an idea whose unsoundness was demonstrated as soon as M. de Lesseps had carried out his grand enterprise. The collapse of the cotton boom, after the downfall of the Confederate Government, when the price of cotton fell within a few weeks or days to its old scale of prices, was the first of the mishaps which suggested a doubt as to the inexhaustibility of the borrowing powers of Egypt, provided, or supposed to be provided, by the readiness of European capitalists to pour money into the coffers

of the Khedive. The second mishap was the discovery, after the opening of the Canal, that Egypt was a heavy loser, instead of a gainer, by the construction, largely at her own cost, of the water-route between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

THE PURSE OF FORTUNATUS

Early life of Ismail—Visit of Sultan to Egypt—Title of Khedive granted—Change in law of succession—Lavish outlay both public and private—Immense appropriation of lands—Amount of indebtedness.

At the time when Ismail Pasha commenced his reign, he was still a comparatively young man, even for the East, where men and women age far more rapidly than they do with us. He had not, in as far as I can learn, received any special education for the position he was called upon to fill. It was not, indeed, till 1859, that Ismail, owing to the death of his elder brother Achmed, became heir-presumptive to the Vice-regal throne, and even then his prospect of succeeding to the throne seemed remote, as his uncle Said, the reigning Viceroy, was not much older than he was himself. During the visit of Said Pasha to England, Ismail held the post of Regent for a few weeks, but after that he took no part in public affairs, and occupied himself in administering his lands, and kept as much as possible away from the Court. Between him and Said no love was lost, and the latter used to speak of his heir as a trader, keen about paltry gains. In common with most of the members

of Mahomet Ali's family, Ismail had travelled abroad as a young man. At the age of fifteen he was sent to Paris, and resided there for two or three years. He acquired a very fluent, though not very accurate, knowledge of French. I should doubt, however, whether he ever made, as a pupil, what the French call *des études sérieuses*, and I fancy that, in common with ninety-nine Orientals out of every hundred who are sent to Europe to study, he learnt very little that was worth learning in European civilization, and a great deal that he would have been better for not learning at all. Being, however, a very shrewd observer, he had noted enough during his travels to appreciate the social, though not the moral, strength of European civilization, and to understand how important it was for himself to enlist the sympathies of Europe in his favour. The first object to which he devoted his attention was to weaken, if not to sever, the bonds which still placed Egypt under vassalage to Turkey. The experience of Mahomet Ali showed that this severance could not be effected by force of arms; and though there is no reason to suppose that Ismail was wanting in courage, an appeal to the God of Battles was not in accordance with his character. Knowing, however, the financial straits of the Ottoman Empire, and the venality of almost all her public men, he came to the conclusion that he could secure, by the power of the purse, what his grandfather had failed to obtain by the power of the sword.

Within a few weeks of Ismail's accession, the Sultan Abdul Aziz paid a visit to Egypt, the first visit that any reigning Sultan had ever paid to the Nile Valley land since Selim I. had conquered the country. The records of the private relations between the Suzerain and the vassal State are not accessible to research. I should doubt greatly whether any such records are in existence. The transactions which passed between the occupants of the Imperial and the Vice-regal thrones, from the days of Mahomet Ali down to those of the British occupation, if not till a considerably later period, were not of a kind to give either party to the bargain any interest in preserving written records. Money passed hands, and as soon as the consideration for its transfer was forthcoming, the less said, and still less written, the better for both seller and buyer. It seems, however, probable, to say the least, that the concessions Ismail was anxious to obtain, and the price he was prepared to pay, were discussed between the Viceroy and the Sultan. Fuad Pasha, who as Grand Vizier had accompanied the Sultan, was offered and accepted without demur a present of £60,000 from Ismail, for the services he had, or was supposed to have, rendered in establishing friendly relations between the Sultan and the Viceroy.

After the visit of the Commander of the Faithful, secret negotiations were opened at Constantinople in order to procure a modification in the title borne by the Viceroys in virtue of the treaty of 1841. As

by the treaty in question, the Vice-royalty had been made hereditary in the family of Mahomet Ali, it is not very intelligible to the European mind, how short of a formal abandonment of the suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt, any alteration in the nominal title of the Viceroy could materially augment his authority. But in the East names count for more than they do in the West. Just as the assumption of the Imperial title in India by the Sovereign of England has, as is commonly agreed, strengthened the prestige of Great Britain amongst her Indian subjects, so it is probable the formal recognition of the fact that the Viceroy of Egypt was not an ordinary Pasha—a mere representative of Turkish authority—but a prince, having a rank and title of his own held by no other Pasha, however powerful—may have been felt by Ismail to be an advantage worth paying for, and paying for—if I may use the expression—through the nose. My personal acquaintance with Ismail, an acquaintanceship which lasted long after his exile, led me to the conclusion that, whatever his other failings may have been, he was not a person likely to attach an exaggerated value to the externals of royalty, or, indeed, to any of its attributes, other than the power and wealth attaching to its exercise. There was too little of sentiment about his nature for him to care much for titles or decorations, except in as far as they tended to advance his absolute supremacy, the attainment of which was the one desire of his heart. Whether at home or abroad,

in Turkey or Egypt, or even in Africa, he could brook no rival near his throne; and I take it therefore for granted that a certain solid advantage attached, at any rate, in his own opinion, to the distinction between his being officially described as a Khedive instead of as a Viceroy. Great difficulty was experienced in discovering any title which would differentiate the ruler of Egypt from the Pashas of other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and yet would not impair in any way the authority of the Sultan as the Suzerain of Egypt. The first title suggested by Ismail was that of El Aziz, one of the many names of Allah, signifying the all-powerful, a name which, according to tradition, had been borne by Joseph when he was the Vakil, or chief steward of Pharaoh. This suggestion was negatived by the Porte, on the ground that this was the title of a holy prophet, for so Joseph is accounted to the present day in the East, and could not therefore be assigned to an earthly potentate, however wealthy or powerful he might be. It was also urged that the name of the ruling Sultan was Abd el Aziz, the slave of Allah the Almighty; and that the conferring of the title of El Aziz upon the Viceroy might create some confusion amongst the followers of Islam as to the relative positions of the Suzerain and his vassal. Finally, after many other titles had been discussed, that of Khedive was proposed by the Porte and accepted by Ismail. Khedive is a Persian adjective, derived from Khiva, a Persian name for God, and means Godly, or Divine. Khidiv,

as I am informed the word is spelt in Persian, signifies a great prince, a man of high power and authority, and was the title held by the ruler of India during the era of Persian dominion. The title had the advantage of being familiar to Egypt. In the early days of Mahomet Ali, he appointed a Grand Council of State, over which he himself presided, and which was supposed in theory, though not in fact, to have a substantive authority, independent of the will of the reigning Pasha. This council was called the Divan Khedive, and has endured in a state of suspended animation up to the present time. I take it that practically this title signified something lower than Shah or Sultan, and something higher than Viceroy; but what that something was, I, for one, have never very clearly ascertained.

It is easier to account for another modification of the Treaty of 1841, to which Ismail attached extreme importance, and for which he was prepared to pay even more lavishly. Under this treaty, the succession, in the event of the demise of a Viceroy, went, according to the law of Islam, to his next eldest kinsman, not to the next heir male in direct descent. The received explanation of this system of succession is that the whole political and social organization of the Ottoman Empire being based upon a war footing, it was essential for the welfare of Islam that the head of the community, the tribe, or the family, should always be a full-grown man, able to defend the interests committed to his charge. A system, however, which

fulfilled its purpose, while the Turks remained a nation of warriors, with their hands against every one of their neighbours, gave rise to gross abuses, when the conquering period of Turkish history had practically passed away. The more one studies Eastern life, the more one arrives at the conclusion that the risk of assassination plays a part in Oriental affairs, public, as well as private, of which happily, we have little knowledge or experience in the world of latter-day Christendom. There is, perhaps, more to be said, as a matter of argument, in defence of the harem system than my fellow-countrymen, and, still more, my fellow-countrywomen, would be apt to allow. To my mind, the one unanswerable objection to polygamy, and to the seclusion of women, is that the system is fatal to the idea of the family, which forms the basis of all true civilization. As a rule, a Turk's sons are all by different mothers, whose lives are passed in incessant intrigues to advance the interests of their own sons, to the detriment of the interests of their half-brothers. There is so much good in human nature, alike in all races and under all creeds, that no system, however bad in theory, ever works out quite so badly in practice as it ought to do logically. I do not question, therefore, that in all countries where the harem system prevails, there are many homes in which the natural forces of kinship have full play. This is especially the case in Egypt, where polygamy is reserved to a small wealthy class, and where the mass of the population are more kindly by character than in other Mahometan lands.

Still subject to the above qualifications, I maintain my assertion that, in the East, the sons of the same father by different mothers are apt to regard each other as enemies rather than friends, as rivals rather than colleagues. It is obvious that this state of things creates a serious objection to the principle laid down by the law of Mahomet, that a man's heir is not his oldest son, as in the West, but his oldest surviving male relative. This objection tells especially in the case of royal personages. In the ordinary course of nature, a son can count upon succeeding to his father; but in the case of brothers, presumably about the same age, the chance of a younger son succeeding an elder is of very little actuarial value. Thus the temptation to expedite the termination of a reigning prince's life is apt to overcome all scruples of conscience or considerations of blood relationship. It is, therefore, conceivable enough that the advisability of removing this temptation from the path of his male relatives, many of whom were much of his own age, by fixing the right of succession to the throne automatically upon his eldest son, should have recommended itself to a suspicious nature, such as Ismail's, as an addition to his personal security, and as an advantage well worth purchasing, even at a heavy cost. I have no ground to say that the Khedive had any just cause for the apprehensions to which I allude, but I do say that, with his intimate knowledge of the events which had attended changes in the succession to the throne both in Turkey and Egypt, the advantage of

depriving his relatives of any motive for desiring the premature ending of his life could not fail to be present to his mind.

Moreover, apart from any personal apprehensions, considerations of State militated strongly in favour of getting the questions of the succession formally guaranteed to his eldest son. The Treaty of 1841 declared that the succession to the Pashaship of Egypt was hereditary in the family of Mahomet Ali. It was, however, open to question how far the Sultan, whose confirmation is necessary to validate the appointment of a new Khedive, was bound to adhere rigidly to the Mahometan law of succession. In the event of any private personage being manifestly incapacitated by age, ill health, or incapacity from assuming the headship of his family, the Mahometan tribunals have the power to pass him over, even though he may be the oldest surviving relative, in favour of some younger kinsman more competent to discharge the duties of the post. The Sultan might, not inconceivably, claim a similar privilege in nominating the heir to the Vice-regal throne. There could be no appeal from his decision, as the Commander of the Faith, and thus it was always on the cards that, on the death of the reigning Viceroy, the Sultan might select, on one plea or another, any near kinsman of the deceased Khedive, without openly violating the conditions of the treaty in virtue of which the hereditary character of the Mahomet Ali dynasty was formally guaranteed. The abandonment of this right of selection by the Porte

constituted a far more important diminution of the suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt than the permission accorded to Ismail Pasha to substitute the title of Khedive for that of Viceroy, and had, in consequence, to be purchased at a far more exorbitant price.

The Porte finally consented to grant the right of hereditary succession from father to son, to the Khedivial dynasty, but stipulated as the price of its consent that the annual tribute payable by Egypt to Turkey should be raised from £400,000 to £750,000. Apart from this enormous increase upon the permanent burdens of Egypt, the concession in question was procured at the cost of a heavy private outlay, of which no record is forthcoming. The use made of this windfall by Turkey was to raise a loan in Europe, the interest on which was guaranteed by pledging the tribute payable by Egypt as security for the payment of the interest.

Again, the exceptional position accorded to the Suez Canal Company by Said Pasha was regarded with alarm by his successor. England, as I have already explained, shared the jealousy with which the Khedive contemplated the establishment of a French *imperium in imperio* within the territory of Egypt. The Sultan was, to say the least, not adverse to the curtailment of the terms of the original concession, provided he was not only secured against any political or financial risk, in consequence of such curtailment, but was paid lavishly for the exercise of his authority as Suzerain. It was, therefore, at the

instigation of Egypt, supported by the then paramount diplomatic influence of England at Stamboul, that the Porte declared various privileges of the Company, granted by the original concession, to be incompatible with the suzerainty of the Sultan. Again, the purse-strings of the Egyptian Treasury, which was only another name for the coffers of the Khedive, had to be drawn upon to an amount the extent of which has never been ascertained, and is now never likely to be ascertained. This much, however, is certain, that if you want anything done by the Ottoman Government, whether the service you require is one viewed with favour or disfavour by the ruling powers, you can only attain your object in one of two ways. The first is by force; the second is by interesting everybody, through whose hands your application passes, in your success, or, in plainer words, by paying for their support. Egypt was unable to employ the first of these methods, and had, therefore, of necessity, to resort to the second.

Thus, in order to consolidate his own position in Egypt, and to liberate himself from the most onerous of the conditions imposed upon the country in consequence of the ill-advised concession accorded to the Suez Canal Company by his predecessor, Ismail at the very outset of his reign had to provide for a variety of exceptional payments, too large in amount to be met out of the normal revenue of Egypt. To meet his requirement, he was compelled to borrow; and, unfortunately for Egypt and for himself, borrowing was found

to be so easy that even a more prudent man than the then Khedive might well have believed that his credit was practically inexhaustible. It is only fair to make allowance for the peculiar position in which Ismail was placed, in passing judgment upon his accumulation of debt during the first seven years of his reign, an indebtedness which ultimately brought about the occupation of Egypt by England, and led to his own deposition from the throne.

All experience has shown that when you once begin living beyond your means, and adding to your income by borrowing, the temptation to increasing instead of curtailing your normal expenditure is well-nigh irresistible. Ismail certainly was not the exception that proves the rule. During the period of which I write, he reorganized the collection of customs and the postal service, and placed their administration under the control of English officials; he extended the railway system throughout Egypt; he erected light-houses, quays, ports, and breakwaters. He established schools; he sent young Egyptians to study in Europe; he entered on building speculations on a large scale in Cairo, Alexandria, and all parts of the country, and introduced any number of improvements. I should say that, in the great majority of instances, these public works of his were calculated to advance the interests of Egypt, but one and all required large initial expenditure from which no immediate return could reasonably be expected. His personal expenditure was also lavish beyond conception. There was a story current

at the time that there existed a tradition in the family of Mahomet Ali that the dynasty was doomed to fall whenever it left off building. Whether the story is true or not, Ismail had certainly a perfect mania for bricks and mortar. In every part of the country he erected palaces, many of which were never occupied, and have since fallen into ruin. Every one of these palaces involved the establishment of a new set of officials, eunuchs, ladies of the harem, slaves, and parasites. Tewfik Pasha assured me himself that when he first looked into the details of his father's household expenditure, after his deposition, it was discovered that ten thousand people had, on one plea or another, meals provided for them daily at the palace of Abdin. A similar reckless expenditure prevailed, more or less, in the Gesireh, Giseh, Ras el Tin, and other minor palaces. Of the luxury of the Vice-regal Court during the palmy days of Ismail's reign I shall have something to say later on. All I need say here is that of the countless, distinguished, and undistinguished guests who, in the early days of his reign, enjoyed Ismail's princely hospitality during their sojourn in Egypt, there was probably not one whose visit did not throw directly a heavier charge on the finances of Egypt than any amount which the country could possibly have gained indirectly by the visitor's own personal expenditure. Another constant drain on the resources of Egypt was provided by the military expeditions sent to the Soudan with the view of extending the territories of the Khedive

to the Equatorial lakes, if not to the Zambesi. I think it probable that both the military expeditions and the lavish outlay on public works to which I have referred, were mainly due to a desire to impress public opinion in Europe with an idea of the greatness of the Khedive's fortune and the magnitude of his resources. The necessity of keeping up appearances is the first lesson learnt by any one who lives beyond his means, and who has not the power, even if he has the wish, to reduce his expenditure. I cannot suppose that, in the course of the years when he was piling debt upon debt, loan upon loan, and liability upon liability, a man so acute as Ismail Pasha, could not have contemplated the possibility that, one day or other, his creditors might get tired of making fresh advances. Given such a possibility, it was obviously his policy to keep up the legend of his fabulous wealth and inexhaustible resources till such time as the vast enterprises on which he had embarked should begin to return a profit. At the same time, it would be an injustice to Ismail to suppose that the only motive of his lavish expenditure was to throw dust in the eyes of his creditors. After all, to employ a French expression, for which I know of no English equivalent, *il voyait grand*. His ambitions, however much they were identified with his own personal aggrandizement, were still not devoid of a certain grandeur. He saw himself in his mind's eye the greatest sovereign on the African continent. He looked forward to the day when, in the event of the impending collapse of the Ottoman Empire,

he might become the virtual, if not the nominal, successor of the Sultan; and he was carried away by the delusion that if he could only secure the continuance of European financial support, he might extend his sovereignty from the Nile to the Bosphorus.

Whether, under any conceivable circumstances, he could have realized his ambition is a question I should hesitate to answer in the affirmative. All I contend is that the ambition was not altogether sordid. If I may venture an opinion of my own as to a very complex, and, from the point of view of a student of human nature, a very interesting character, Ismail's main defect was an inability to separate his personal greed of power from his political aspirations. The one principle to which he remained constant was a resolve to make himself absolutely supreme at home, if he could not do so abroad. In accordance with this principle, he was bent upon converting Egypt into a farm, of which he was to be the sole landlord. His ruling idea was to acquire possession of the whole land of Egypt, and to work it for his own advantage and profit. It was with this view that he contrived, by fair means or foul, by confiscation, by exactions, or even, if necessary, by purchase, to make himself the personal owner of one-fifth of the whole soil of Egypt. If his credit had not been exhausted before his object could be obtained, he would have constituted himself a sort of Royal Alexander Selkirk, the monarch of all he surveyed. That, by so doing, he would simply have killed the goose that laid the golden eggs, was

a truth he never discovered till it was too late to save his fortunes.

Be this as it may, there is no disputing the plain fact that during the thirteen years which elapsed between Ismail's accession and the Cave Mission, in 1876, the public debt of Egypt had increased in round numbers by close upon one hundred millions sterling. When Said died in 1863, the public debt of Egypt was under £4,000,000, or about one year's revenue. In 1875, that is at the commencement of the financial crisis, which led first to International intervention, and afterwards to the British occupation, further indebtedness had been contracted to the extent of at least £100,000,000. This amount was made up of loans raised in Europe, which represented a total of £50,000,000; of loans effected with private persons for some £11,000,000; of a floating debt secured by Treasury bonds to the extent of £26,000,000; and of a sum, roughly speaking, of £13,000,000, made up by claims for work done, monies advanced, or services rendered. These nondescript debts were due for the most part to foreigners.

ISMAIL IN HIS GRANDEUR

Inauguration of Suez Canal—Concourse of visitors to Egypt—Ismail pays cost of their entertainment—Construction of road to Pyramids — The corvée at work — Lavish magnificence of the inaugural ceremonies—Extraordinary repute of Ismail at this period—From Ismailia to Chislehurst.

I SUSPECT, if the truth could be known, that, before the opening of the Suez Canal—the climax of Ismail's short-lived grandeur—the black quarter of an hour of Rabelais, had begun to make its approach manifest. It may have been partly a desire to bolster up his financial repute which induced the Khedive to inaugurate the completion of this great work with a prodigal lavishness worthy of the supposed owner of Aladdin's lamp. But though such a desire may have confirmed him in his purpose, nothing, if my view of his character is correct, could have enabled him to resist the temptation afforded by an unparalleled opportunity for displaying himself before the world as an enlightened Sovereign, as the champion of progress, as the founder of a new dynasty destined to restore to Egypt all, and more than all, the glories of her past.

As I have pointed out, Said Pasha deserves the credit of having first rendered possible the construction of the Canal by the concessions he granted to M. de Lesseps. In the early days of his reign, Ismail took up an attitude of hostility towards the enterprise so favoured by his predecessor. But when the award given by the Emperor of the French had enabled the Company to surmount the difficulties raised by the action of the Sultan, and when the feasibility of the Canal's construction had been placed beyond reasonable doubt, Ismail resolved to identify himself with the grandest industrial enterprise of the nineteenth century, the grandest, that is, in its results rather than in the natural obstacles it had to encounter. During the years which intervened between the commencement and the termination of the works, the Company was on more than one occasion in financial difficulties. Money had to be raised, and Ismail's assistance was readily forthcoming. Finally, in pursuance of the same policy, the Khedive took upon his own shoulders the cost of the gorgeous festivities by which the opening of the new ship Canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean was to be inaugurated. A story was current at the time, which illustrates in a remarkable manner the curious mixture of shrewdness and folly exhibited by Ismail's progress on the road to ruin. As the Sovereign of Egypt, he caused circulars to be sent to the leading purveyors of feasts—in other words, to the Gunters of the Levant—asking

them to tender for the supply of the wines, repasts, waiters, linen, plate, and tents, he required for the *fêtes* he proposed giving at Ismailia. These tenders contained the usual statement that, though the Government did not pledge itself to accept the lowest tender, its intention was to give the contract to whichever of the competing purveyors offered the cheapest terms, and also furnished evidence of his power to execute the contract in a satisfactory manner. The circulars had hardly been issued before Ismail, according to current report, caused private information to be conveyed to the purveyors to whom these circulars had been forwarded, to the effect that the contract would, as a matter of fact, be given to the competitor who agreed to pay the Khedive himself the largest commission on his tender. Nobody realized more keenly than Ismail that, for all intents and purposes, the Egyptian Treasury and his own privy purse were one and the same thing—a sort of financial Peter and Paul. Peter was thus to pay a higher price for the cost of the Ismailia *fêtes* in order that Paul might put a larger backsheish into his own pockets. Yet I have no doubt that Peter, as well as Paul, felt convinced that between them they had done a clever stroke of business.

Invitations to the opening were issued broadcast months beforehand. It was Ismail's purpose to collect a notable gathering not only of crowned heads, but of all the notabilities of the civilized world in science, art, literature, journalism, trade, finance, shipping,

engineering, and political economy. I doubt if any very careful record was kept either of the names or numbers of those who accepted the invitations; but most assuredly there were some thousands of more or less well-known visitors who arrived in Egypt, bearers of cards of invitation. Amongst the category of the less well-known, I myself was one. Nothing could be more generous than the arrangements made for the entertainment of the visitors. The recipient of an invitation was entitled to a gratuitous passage from Europe to Alexandria or Port Said and back, to board and lodging during his sojourn in Egypt, to free passes on the railroads, and to admission to all the functions connected with the opening of the Canal. The Egyptian officials had instructions to show every attention to the visitors. Carriages, donkeys, and dragomen were provided without charge for any guest who took the trouble to apply to the Master of the ceremonies. No bills were presented, no vouchers were required, and it is not too much to say that any one of the Khedive's visitors might have spent two months in Egypt without ever needing to put his hand in his pocket for anything except personal expenses, such as baths and washing, and even these expenses were refunded with alacrity if, as often happened, any visitor applied for their repayment. The invitations were issued in the name of the Suez Canal Company, and therefore the majority of the guests were naturally French. But there was no favour shown

to one nationality over another — all were alike welcome.

Looking back at the past, with the benefit of my later and fuller acquaintance with Egypt and its then administration, I cannot doubt orders were given to all local authorities that the visitors should be allowed to look, as little as possible, behind the scenes. Excursions and entertainments were arranged for every day well-nigh of their stay. The visitors, as a body, saw as little of the work-a-day Egypt as the Empress Catherine saw of the Siberia through which she was conducted by Prince Potemkin. The Nile railroad had recently been opened as far as Minieh, about a hundred miles south of Cairo, and I happened to mention to an official, with whom I had struck up an acquaintance, my intention of going to Minieh to see the sugar factories, which the Khedive had recently erected. I saw at once my suggestion was not welcome. I was told it would be quite impossible for me to obtain any accommodation in the town, and was begged to postpone my visit till arrangements could be made for my fitting reception. Naturally the arrangements were never made. In common with all fresh visitors to Cairo, I was anxious to see the Pyramids at once, but was informed I must wait till the carriage road was completed. Being young then, and active, I immediately engaged a donkey at my own expense, and found no difficulty in getting to my destination. But once there, inexperienced as I was, I soon perceived the reason why

the officials who had charge of the visitors preferred that they should postpone their visit to the Pyramids. The reason is characteristic both of Egypt and of Ismail. To well-nigh all Egyptians it was, and is, unintelligible why Europeans should be in a hurry to visit the Pyramids, or, indeed, any of the marvels of the bygone days of Egypt. When it was known that France was going to be represented at the opening of the Canal by the Empress of the French, somebody told the Khedive that her Majesty would of course wish to see the Pyramids. "A carriage road must be made at once," was the only comment of the Khedive. Orders were issued forthwith to the Mudirs in the neighbourhood that ten thousand fellahs must be sent without a day's delay to work on the road, and that the task must be completed within six weeks at the latest. In those days the Khedive had only to speak to be obeyed. Within the period named, an excellent carriage road of some seven miles in length, the longest in all the Delta, was constructed from the banks of the Nile to the foot of the pyramid of Cheops. I was one of the few persons, not employed on the work, who witnessed the mode of its construction. All along the line of road there were gangs of fellaheen, stripped bare to the loins, and engaged in carrying up sand in baskets to build the embankment on which the roadway was to be laid. The heat was exceptionally great, and the workmen were dead beat. But at every moment the foreman of the gang stirred them up to fresh exertions by blows with the kurbash on

their bare backs and shoulders; and if the work did not proceed fast enough in the opinion of the overseers, they in turn called up the foremen, and subjected them to the same treatment as they had applied to their workmen. If the work had not been finished in due course, the overseers themselves, provided they were natives, would doubtless have been bastinadoed. The spectacle was not a pleasant one to witness, or even to remember, but it gave me an insight into the manner how Egypt was ruled, and had been ruled for ages, which tended to lessen the glamour impressed upon myself, in common with all my fellow-visitors, by the lavish hospitality with which we were treated, and by the magnificence of the entertainment to which we had been bidden from afar. The inaugural *fêtes* are now well-nigh forgotten; the palace, built by Ismail on the banks of the Lake Timsah in order to provide a fitting locality for a ball to be given to the Empress Eugenie, has, after standing empty for years, been converted into offices; the sheds wherein for three full days open tables were kept for ten thousand people, and whereat champagne flowed like water from dawn to long after midnight; the city of tents in which the visitors were lodged; the illuminations; the fireworks; the gorgeous procession of Bedouin Sheiks;—all these things, like Hans Breitman's "barty," are *in die Ewigkeit.* To my mind, the recital of an entertainment one has not assisted at one's self is as uninteresting as the *menu* of a dinner one has not eaten. Indeed, I should

hardly have referred to the pageants, which celebrated the opening of the Suez Canal, if they did not illustrate the utter contempt for considerations of economy, which characterized the heyday of Ismail's reign. This much, however, should be remembered in his favour, that, however culpable his extravagance may have been, it was palliated by a sort of perverted grandeur of conception. The other day I happened to pick up an autobiography written by a young gentleman, whose sole claim to note lay in the fact that, in the space of twelve months, he had got rid of the fortune of half a million which became his own on the attainment of his majority. What struck me most in its perusal was not the outlay by which in a year's time the author reduced himself from opulence to penury, as the absolute absence of any consideration in return for the wealth he had wasted. No such charge could be brought against the Khedive Ismail. He found Egypt solvent and prosperous with a public debt of only four millions, and in less than ten years he was the ruler of a ruined and almost bankrupt State, burdened with debts of over a hundred millions, which had all been contracted by himself and spent, in the main, for his own aggrandizement. Still, in return for the ruin he had brought on himself and his country, Ismail had his day of triumph, and left his mark on history. Nothing which occurred later can alter the fact that at the period when the ships of the world, going to and fro between East and West, exchanged the Cape route for the Canal across the

Isthmus, he was not only in virtue of his connection with the new highway of commerce, but of his own repute and prestige, one of the leading personages in Asia, Europe, and Africa. Emperors, kings, princes, statesmen were proud to be his guests, to be reckoned amongst his friends. The inauguration of the Canal was popularly regarded as only the commencement of a glorious reign. The air was full of his projects and his ambitions. He was going, so men said, to convert Cairo into a city whose magnificence should surpass that of the great capitals of Europe. He was sending Baker Pasha, better known as Sir Samuel Baker, at an enormous salary, to establish his hold on the Soudan, and to extend his dominions to the Equatorial lakes. He was going to enlist European, and especially British, sympathies in behalf of his schemes of conquest by suppressing the slave trade throughout his kingdom. He was making railways to the Soudan by the help of English engineers. He was regarded as destined, at no distant date, to be the founder of a new African Empire; and vague rumours were current that when he had consolidated his position in Africa, he intended to play a leading part in the settlement of the Eastern Question. Looking back on the past with the knowledge of to-day, it does not seem that the then prevalent belief in the star of Ismail was quite as irrational as it may appear to-day. Most, if not all, his ambitions might have been realized, if the capitalists who had competed for the

privilege of providing him with any funds he might require, had not become alarmed at the extent of his indebtedness. The first indications of any falling off in the facility for contracting fresh loans had, I believe, made themselves manifest in the year which witnessed the opening of the Suez Canal. But these indications were not sufficiently marked to disturb Ismail seriously. If one capitalist, he probably argued, would not advance any more money, there were a dozen who would be pleased to raise fresh loans for his convenience; and if the interest asked was a little higher, the extra price demanded was to him a matter of complete indifference. Moreover, he had some cause for imagining that his display of apparently boundless wealth at the inaugural ceremonies would remove any hesitation the financiers of Europe might entertain as to the policy of increasing their loans; and he had still more cause for assuming that the manner in which the Emperor Napoleon III. had identified himself with the Suez Canal by deputing the Empress to preside at its inauguration, would secure him the support of the Imperial Court, and, as a necessary corollary, the support of the French financial world. In common with many wiser men, in a far better position to judge of European politics, Ismail had never reckoned on the possibility of Sedan. It was the downfall of the Second Empire which brought about the collapse of Ismail, or, at any rate, rendered this collapse more sudden and more complete than it would have been otherwise.

Before I pass on, let me recall one incident connected with the opening of the Suez Canal. The last time I saw the Empress Eugenie during her visit to Egypt was on the night of the State ball given in her honour at Ismailia. There were present at this festival any number of Royalties, but the Empress of the French was, by common consent, the mistress of the revels. It was not only her position as a woman, her queen-like presence, her singular beauty, still hardly touched by the lapse of years, which gave her practical, if not nominal, precedence even in the presence of the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary. It was as the representative of France and of the Napoleonic dynasty that every one, from the Khedive downwards, was anxious to pay her the respect due to her connection with the great enterprise then just completed. I can see her still in my mind's eye as covered with diamonds she moved, like a goddess, amidst the crowds who stood up to give her passage to the daïs on which, surrounded by crowned heads and the heirs to Royal thrones, she took her seat as, if I may use the phrase, the patroness of the ball. I can still hear the strains of *Partant pour la Syrie* which the bands played in her honour as she embarked on the Imperial yacht, the *Aigle*, on leaving the ball, and the salutes by which her departure was proclaimed. The ball took place in November, 1869.

I did not see the Empress again till a few months later. It so chanced that one hot, dull afternoon in

London, in the mid-September of 1870, I was waiting for some friends at the Charing Cross railway station, when I saw a one-horse fly, driven by a coachman, whose shabby oiled hat and dirty white Berlin gloves proclaimed him as belonging to some second-rate livery stable, stop at the station. Its sole occupant was a lady, attired in very dusty black, looking weary and travel-worn and all alone. The lady was the Empress Eugenie. It was a Saturday afternoon, and the station was crowded with West End holiday makers. The Empress was going to Chislehurst, and found it difficult to pass the barriers, and had at last to appeal to the assistance of one of the policemen on duty. I saw the constable elbow a way for her Majesty through the dense masses, to whom she was unknown by sight, and then, as I turned away, I felt that I had just witnessed one of the most extraordinary vicissitudes of fortune recorded in the annals of Royalty. From the ball-room of Lake Timsah to the platform of a London railway station; from the *Aigle* to a stray seat in a crowded suburban train; and all in ten short months!

THE ROAD TO RUIN

Sultan forbids issue of further loans in Egypt—Ismail and his financial agents—Services rendered by the Mufettish—The Khedive resorts to desperate expedients to avoid bankruptcy—The forced loan of the Moukabala—Gathering of birds of prey at Cairo—Sale by Ismail of his Suez Canal shares to England—Payment of State bonds suspended.

THE first writing on the wall, announcing that the end was at hand, came, of all places in the world, from Constantinople, and appeared on the very morrow of the Suez Canal inauguration. The Empress and the other Royal guests had quitted Egypt before the end of November, 1869. In the following month the Sultan issued a firman, by which the Viceroy was debarred in future from contracting any fresh loans and imposing any new taxes. It hardly needs saying that this decree was not dictated by any disinterested desire on the part of the Suzerain to promote the welfare of the vassal province. The most probable explanation of its issue is that the Porte was alarmed at the apparently inexhaustible command of money secured to the Khedive by the readiness of Europe to supply his pecuniary needs; and partly by an impression that the competition of Egypt, as a borrower, was likely to increase the

difficulty Turkey had long experienced of raising loans abroad for her own use. Possibly, too, the Ottoman authorities, who had far better means than anybody else of appreciating the enormous amount of indebtedness which Ismail had already incurred, now began to perceive that a financial crisis was imminent in Egypt, and that such a crisis, if it could not be averted, or at any rate postponed, must of necessity bring about the further collapse of Turkish credit in the money marts of Europe. What is not so easy to understand is why Ismail should have consented to restrictions which debarred, or were supposed to debar, him from resorting to the only methods by which he could reasonably have hoped to meet the immense liabilities so rapidly maturing. The only explanations I can offer are that his knowledge of Turkey led him to believe that these restrictions could always be removed for a consideration; that he was convinced they could easily be evaded in fact, if not in name; that he immensely exaggerated the facility with which he could raise money by private loans and exactions; or that he had reached the stage in the road to ruin during which a spendthrift is prepared to pay any price, however ruinous, by which temporary relief can be obtained from a pressing emergency.

I should, however, extremely doubt whether at this period, or indeed till a much later date, either Ismail himself or his ministers and advisers had any very distinct idea of the character and extent of his liabilities. The public accounts of the State were mixed up

in inextricable confusion with the personal accounts of the Khedive. Receipts and expenses were transferred and re-transferred from one account to another, according as it suited the policy of the Government to increase or diminish the respective liabilities of the Sovereign and the State. The accounts, in as far as they were kept at all, were kept entirely by Coptic clerks, who possess an unrivalled reputation in the East for manipulating accounts in any way which may be acceptable to their employers. It was not till the control of the accountant's office came into English hands, under the Anglo-French Ministry, that any reliable evidence could be obtained as to the respective liabilities and revenues of Egypt and her ruler; and even the creditors of the Khedive utterly failed in their various attempts to make out any satisfactory account of the financial position of Egypt previous to the time when her finances were subjected to European supervision.

Moreover, Ismail was suspicious by nature even beyond the wont of Oriental potentates. His ministers, courtiers, confidants, and agents, even those who enjoyed his especial favour, and with whom he was on the terms of the closest intimacy, never failed to discover, sooner or later, that his apparently outspoken frankness always concealed some *arrière pensée*. In all his endless financial complications, he never gave his absolute confidence to any one person, but was wont to employ a number of separate go-betweens, armed with different instructions, and acting

independently of, and often in ignorance of, each other. No agent of his was ever certain whether he was not himself the dupe of his employer. As illustrative of this strange side of Ismail's character, let me recall an incident which was communicated to me by the person who, next to Ismail, had the best reasons for knowing the true facts of the case. After his exile, Ismail was, as usual, in want of money, and applied to an English gentleman, with whom he had had previous business relations, to effect a settlement with some creditors pressing for payment. At this time his Highness was residing in Italy, and my informant, by his request, went to breakfast with him at the Favorita palace in the neighbourhood of Naples, which had been offered the ex-Khedive as a temporary abode by Victor Emmanuel. Ismail was, as usual, charming in his reception of his guest, and began talking to him about their common acquaintances in bygone days. Suddenly their conversation was interrupted by the announcement that a messenger from a local bank had brought a letter, which required an immediate answer. The messenger was introduced, and presented a letter. After reading it, Ismail dismissed the messenger with the curt answer, "I will write in reply," and then, with apparent hesitation, turned round to his visitor and said, "Read this, and you will understand why I am upset." The letter was a formal notice from the bank, calling attention to the fact that his Highness's account was overdrawn to the extent of several thousand pounds, and

requesting an immediate settlement of the overdraft. It so happened that my informant had some business of a completely independent kind to transact with the bank in question. In the course of his transactions he learnt accidentally that the Khedive's account had never been overdrawn, that a substantial balance stood to his credit, and that no messenger had ever been sent by the bank with reference to the state of his account. The mystification, as my informant imagined, had been purposely arranged to impress him with the conviction that Ismail was in straits for money, and to thereby enable him to urge upon his creditors the expediency of accepting a reduction of their claims. Any number of similar stories have been told me as to the expedients to which Ismail resorted during the period when, to use a vulgar phrase, he was "fighting the devil" to raise money somehow or other for the wants of the day.

During the six years which elapsed between the opening of the Canal and the Cave Mission, Ismail's life was one long hand-to-hand struggle to meet the incessant calls upon his resources, and to do so, in as far as possible, without injuring his financial credit. He fought the fight gallantly. In as far as I am aware, he had no confidant, native or foreign, on whom he placed absolute reliance; yet, throughout it all, he never lost his courage or his cheerfulness. The nearest approach to a confidant that he ever possessed was Ismail Pasha Sadyk, whom foreigners spoke of as the Minister of Finance, and whom

natives called the Mufettish, or Chief Steward. The Mufettish was a fellah by birth, of humble origin, a man of little education, who, by force of a certain perverted ability, had recommended himself to the favour of the Khedive. He, being a peasant, and knowing the ways of his fellow-peasants, understood far better than the Turks, of whom the Egyptian ministries of the day were mainly composed, how to get money out of the fellaheen. To Ismail, in his urgent financial straits, such knowledge was invaluable. It would be difficult to say that the Mufettish was more unscrupulous than the ordinary Turkish Pashas of his generation, but most assuredly he was not a whit more scrupulous, and he certainly understood his business better. It was on him, therefore, that Ismail chiefly relied to raise money from the fellaheen, whenever money had to be provided at all costs and all hazards. I am convinced that Ismail, being, as I have said, a man of kindly nature, took care to know as little as might be of the means by which the Mufettish supplied the funds required to meet the constant drains upon the Egyptian Treasury; but he was far too intelligent not to be aware that these means involved the grossest injustice and oppression. It is enough to say that in the long annals of Egyptian history, the common people had seldom experienced so bad a time as they did during Ismail's later years of reign. Taxes were raised and imposed without regard to any other consideration than the demands of the

Treasury, or, in other words, the wants of the Khedive. When the money was not forthcoming, the fellaheen were compelled to borrow from the Greek village money-lenders at usurious rates, and when they were unable to borrow more, and when even the application of the bastinado had failed to extract money from them, their lands were confiscated and sold for nominal prices. Out of all these transactions the Mufettish appropriated a profit for himself, and in the course of a very few years amassed so large a fortune that at the time of his death, of which I shall have to speak later, he was supposed to have been worth a couple of millions sterling. The fellaheen, in common with all servile nations, were adepts at deception ; lying and pilfering were the only weapons which they could use for their own protection against the rapacity of the Government, the tax-gatherer, the Pasha, and the Sheik. But in respect of all dodges and devices for evading payment, the Mufettish was himself a past-master of the craft. He could tell, as it were by instinct, how much any fellah was worth, how much he could be compelled to part with under threat of punishment, and how much punishment he required in order to induce him to hand over his hard-earned and dearly cherished savings. If the application of the kurbash failed to extort payment from the fellah, imprisonment on some trumped-up charge, compulsory enlistment in the Egyptian armies of the Soudan, or the cutting off of the water from his lands, were the means employed

to compel him to sell his lands, at any sacrifice. The Pashas and the large native landowners could not be treated in so summary a fashion. But under one form or another they were called upon to contribute forced loans to meet the never-ceasing demands of the Government; and in consideration of these loans they were allowed to recoup themselves by extorting from the fellaheen whatever meagre pittance they were left possessed of after the visits of the tax-gatherer. The only class of the Egyptian community exempt from the clutches of the Mufettish were the foreign residents, who, under the Capitulations, could not be legally taxed in any way while, as against illegal exactions, they were secured by the action of the Powers, whose protection they claimed, either as born or as naturalized subjects. The local usurers, for the most part Levantine Greeks, battened on the sufferings of the fellaheen. Having agents of their own all over the country, they knew which of the natives were at their wits' end to meet the demands of the Government collectors, and offered to advance the sum required on the security of the growing crops. The rate of interest varied from 12 per cent. to 20 per cent. a month, according to the need of the borrowers, while payment had to be made either in money or in kind, at the option of the lender. When the crop was ready for the harvest, the usurer sent an agent to squat on the ground mortgaged for the loan, and to supervise the gathering of the crops. It was the money-lender

who determined what amount he had the right to seize in satisfaction of his advances, and, as a rule, he contrived to leave the borrower still in debt after he had paid a sum for the renewal of the loan more than sufficient to cover the original loan. I have no wish to paint things as blacker than they were. The oppression under which the native population of Egypt suffered during the era of the Mufettish did not, I am convinced, appear as monstrous either to the perpetrators or the victims as it does to the European mind. That the people should suffer, because their master needs money, seems to the Oriental only in accordance with the law of the universe. I do not believe that the fellaheen of to-day entertain any keen feeling of resentment towards their native rulers for the sufferings they underwent previous to the downfall of Ismail at all analogous to that which, under like circumstances, would be entertained by an European population.

A record of the expedients to which the Khedive was driven by the constant necessity of meeting the enormous demands upon his Treasury would afford a curious chapter to the chronicler of the annals of insolvency. If once he made default in any of the payments due on his public loans, his credit was gone; and with the loss of his credit went the possibility of inducing European capitalists to open their purse-strings again. Similar considerations precluded any curtailment of the public works to which he had committed himself. The Alexandria breakwater had to

be completed, the Soudan railway had to be carried on, the Equatorial provinces had to be conquered and annexed, not only to gratify his ambition, but to stave off, if possible, the collapse of his repute for boundless wealth, on whose continuance there lay his one hope of escaping ruin.

If, at this period of his career, it had been possible for Ismail to have made out an honest and complete statement of all the liabilities he had incurred in his dual capacity of Khedive and of sole controller of the domain of Egypt, and if he had submitted this statement to any shrewd man of business, and had asked advice as to what course he ought to pursue, I am inclined to think the advice tendered—if the adviser had spoken not as a moralist, but as a man of the world—would have been to the effect that Ismail's financial position was so desperate it could hardly be made worse than it was, and that his best chance of extricating himself from his financial embarrassments was to keep up appearances. It is very easy to say what abstract integrity would dictate, but it is by no means easy to say how the dictates of abstract integrity are always to be carried out in practice.

For a time the effort to maintain the semblance of wealth after the reality had vanished proved successful. By hook or by crook money was found to meet the constantly increasing expenditure. All debts that it was not imperatively necessary to pay in cash, were paid by Treasury bonds, which, as a matter of fact, were mere promissory notes guaranteed by the

Egyptian Government, or, in other words, by Ismail. From what I can learn, these bonds were constantly issued without any notification being made to the Khedive's ministers, or even without their issue being formally recorded at the Egyptian Treasury. The bonds of course were not accepted by independent creditors at their face value; and as the number of these bonds grew with alarming rapidity, they kept falling in value as compared with gold. Then, too, money was borrowed everywhere where borrowing was possible, and especially from the European residents and merchants in Egypt. Alexandria was then, far more than it is to-day, a community devoted to gambling; and to lend money to the Khedive was a kind of business eminently congenial to the Levantine mind. His Highness was indifferent as to the rate at which he borrowed, so long as the advance was made. The loans, especially those of small amount, had a reasonable prospect of being repaid with more or less of regularity, or, if not repaid, of being renewed on still more favourable terms for the lender, and they possessed, therefore, an attraction for small speculators quite distinct from their financial worth. In addition to this the Pashas, as I have said, were called upon to contribute to the financial requirements of the Treasury. In August, 1871, the Government issued the famous law of the Moukabala. The law in question raised, later on, any number of controversies, both as to law and fact. There are people who take especial

pleasure in solving arithmetical puzzles. To such I would recommend the investigation of the abortive measure which gave birth to the law of the Moukabala. I only allude to the law in question as illustrating the extreme straits to which, as early as 1871, Ismail was brought by his financial embarrassments. The Council of State—whose members were mere nominees—passed a decree at the instigation of the Government, permitting native landowners to free their lands from all further taxation by paying forthwith an amount equal to six years of the land-tax due on their estates. In the East, a decree issued by the Government, and permitting its subjects to do certain things, is understood, and meant to be understood, as tantamount to an order enjoining upon its subjects the duty of doing the things in question. Thus, in reality, the Moukabala was regarded as a law under which the landowners were to be compelled to make a forced loan to the Government by purchasing at apparently moderate prices the freehold of their properties on condition of paying at once an amount equal to six years of the land-tax, subject to which they held their leases. The decree, however, failed to produce the return expected. The native landowners entertained a well-founded suspicion that what the Khedive gave, the Khedive could take away, and were therefore reluctant to enter into a compact, however advantageous its terms might be, which could be revoked at any moment at the good pleasure of the Effendina. On the other hand, the European

creditors denounced the proposed decree as involving the permanent forfeiture of the chief source of income possessed by Egypt for the sake of an utterly inadequate contribution in ready cash. Owing to native distrust and foreign protest, the scheme, based on the law of the Moukabala, fell dead ; and the only practical outcome of the law was that a certain limited number of landowners paid down a considerable sum of money to free their estates from further taxation ; and from that day to this have failed to obtain either the relief they had purchased or any substantial return of their money. Again, apart from the debts, more or less regularized by the issue of Treasury bonds, the Khedive, during the period of which I write, contracted any number of irregular debts with the tradesmen of Cairo, Alexandria, and the provincial towns. The debts, individually, were small in amount, but collectively they represented an enormous total. The accounts of the Palace were kept most irregularly, if at all ; and in order to avoid the necessity of immediate payment, the accounts sent in by the Vice-regal creditors were not, as a rule, disputed, however exorbitant their charges might have been.

Ismail, whatever his failings might have been, could certainly not be accused of parsimony, either in great matters or in small. Long before any serious doubts as to his solvency had begun to be entertained by his State creditors, the knowledge that he was short of money for his personal needs had

become current in all the quarters where men, who live by their wits, are apt to foregather. In my travels over the veldt in South Africa, it has been my fortune on various occasions to see a horse, or ox, or mule, in the team by which our party was conveyed, fall down on the ground, worn out by overwork, lack of food, or sudden sickness. The traces were cut, and the poor brute was left to die where he had fallen. There was not a sign on the earth below or in the sky above of any living thing, but if within a few minutes of the beast of burden sinking to the ground, and refusing to move from the spot where he lay, you happened to gaze upwards, you would see a black speck on the far-away horizon. As you looked, the specks increased rapidly in size and numbers ; and before your team had moved on far enough to lose sight of their dying comrade, you would catch sight of a flock of vultures swooping down to gorge themselves with the flesh of the still half-living corpse.

I never witnessed the descent of the *Ass Vögels* from the clear sky in the Transvaal without the spectacle bringing back to my mind the remembrance of the days when all the adventurers of Europe swooped down on Egypt on becoming aware that Ismail Pasha was in pecuniary straits, and that there was money to be made out of his embarrassments. All the knights of industry—the inventors, who only required temporary advances to procure fabulous wealth for their patrons ; the promoters of impracticable

schemes; the holders of unappreciated patents; the jackals of finance, ready to negotiate loans for any amount with principals, whose names they were not prepared to disclose; the applicants for concessions; the professional gamblers; the purveyors of all kinds of entertainments; the dramatic agents; the soldiers of fortune; the parasites of civilization; the social outcasts of all parts of the world—seemed by some common instinct to have made Cairo their trysting-place. This motley society of cosmopolitan adventurers found a ready welcome at the Khedivial Court during the days of its impending downfall.

Drowning men are prone, as we all know, to catch at straws, and in the plight in which Ismail was placed, any adventurer of the Casanova type who held out hopes, however illusory, of any wild project by which his fortunes might be retrieved, was certain of an effusive welcome. Moreover, there was a fibre in Ismail Pasha's character which responded to men who lived upon their wits at the expense of others. When he was taken during one of his visits to Paris to see the Bourse, and had had explained to him the methods by which speculative fortunes are made and lost on the Stock Exchange, he is recorded to have remarked, "*Si je n'étais pas Khedive, je voudrais être Agent de Change.*" He was far too shrewd not to see that the great majority of the adventurers who clustered about his court were living, or trying to live, at his cost, and were, as a rule, fooling him. But somehow their fertility of imagination, their want

of inconvenient principles, their readiness to study his humours and flatter his vanity, were acceptable to him as a change from the apprehensions of financial disaster, with which his mind was necessarily haunted day and night. Even proof positive that his associates were deliberately defrauding him did not suffice to deprive them of his half-appreciative, half-contemptuous patronage. One of the most notorious members of the crew of Comus, who had made Abdin their headquarters, was detected one day in some act of flagrant dishonesty towards his host, was bidden to Ismail's presence, and was informed with the dignity the Khedive knew so well how to assume, that, after what had occurred, the doors of the Palace would no longer be open for his admittance. The next day, however, the expelled adventurer, who understood the character of his patron, borrowed a ladder and climbed into the Vice-regal audience chamber, remarking as he entered, "I have obeyed your Highness's commands, and have crossed your threshold by the window, and not by the door." The remark appealed to Ismail's sense of humour; the offence was forthwith forgiven, and the offender was reinstated in the Vice-regal favour. The foreign entourage of the Khedivial Court at this date included men of every nationality, but I should say that France and Italy contributed the most numerous and most successful contingent to this association of free lances. Amongst them there were doubtless not a few of our fellow-countrymen, but they and our Trans-Atlantic kinsmen, though perhaps

equally devoid of scruples, were less expert than men of Latin race in ingratiating themselves with an Oriental potentate.

To recite all the expedient devices and shifts by which Ismail for nearly six years, after he had lost the power of raising fresh loans, contrived to stave off the day of reckoning, would require a far larger space than I can devote to the subject, and would also be of little interest to the general reader. It is enough to say that year by year the liabilities of Egypt grew greater; the charges for raising fresh debts, or deferring payment of old debts, became heavier; the exceptional revenues raised by every sort of exaction and oppression dwindled away more and more; the securities on which money could be raised either at home or abroad got fewer in number and scantier in value. In 1875 about the only available asset which the Khedive had it in his power to pledge was the £4,000,000 of Suez Canal shares, allotted originally to Said Pasha. In 1875, the financial situation, as I have attempted to describe it in the foregoing pages, was very imperfectly known by the outside public. After all, the interest on the Khedive's foreign loans had hitherto been paid regularly, the loans still stood at high prices, and the bondholders so far had every reason to be satisfied with their investments in Egyptian securities. It is difficult to suppose that the true state of affairs should not have been suspected by the foreign colony in Egypt. But it is intelligible enough that their suspicions, even if entertained,

should not have been made known to the public. The Levantine community were naturally averse to any disclosure of the virtual insolvency of the Egyptian Government, not only because such a disclosure would cut down the profits they were reaping so largely by the renewals of their advances, but because it would endanger their chance of recovering these advances in their integrity. The instinct of all gamblers is to back their luck, and as every one of the Khedive's Levantine creditors hoped to get out himself before the crash came, his interest was to say as little as possible of what he might know or suspect, and do all in his power to keep up the impression, which many of them, I believe, entertained honestly to the very last, that the financial difficulties of Egypt, in as far as they existed, were only temporary, not permanent.

Of course it was known—it could not but be known—to the representatives of the great powers of Europe at the Khedivial Court—that the Government to which they were accredited was short of money. Both England and France, the two Powers which had the keenest interest in Egypt, were each anxious to secure a preponderating influence in the valley of the Nile, or, perhaps, to speak more accurately, to hinder the other from acquiring any such preponderance. Somehow or other intelligence reached Colonel Stanton, at that period the British Consul-General at Cairo, that negotiations had been set on foot in Paris with the object of raising money by the sale, or the hypothecation, of the Khedive's Suez Canal shares.

This intelligence was conveyed to London, with a strong recommendation from Colonel Stanton that the British Government should buy the shares. The recommendation, if I am rightly informed, was accompanied by an expression of opinion that the advance of £4,000,000 would relieve the Khedive from any pressing financial embarrassment, and that, if made at all, it must be made at once, on the ground that as soon as the French Ministry learnt that the purchase of the shares in question was contemplated in England, they would close with the proposal which was still under their consideration.

Fortunately for England, she had at this period as head of the State the one Prime Minister, with the possible exception of Lord Palmerston, who, during the Victorian era, showed himself capable, in case of necessity, of disregarding official traditions and acting with the prompt vigour by which our merchants and our traders have created, not only their own fortunes, but those of the British Empire. There has been much controversy between various personages connected with Egypt as to whom the credit should be assigned of having originated the idea of forestalling France by the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. I think myself that the chief, if not the sole, credit attaching to the transaction should be assigned to Benjamin Disraeli, who was then, for the first time in his chequered career, not only Prime Minister, but the Prime Minister of an united party, supported by a powerful majority in the country as well as in

Parliament. No other statesman of our time would have had the courage to risk his personal position, to ignore the absence of all precedent, and to take upon himself the sole responsibility of a momentous decision which of necessity called for immediate action. Lord Rowton has often told me how, as the Premier's private secretary, he was sent into the city to ascertain from the then head of the great house of Rothschild whether he would lend the British Government £4,000,000 sterling on no security whatever except the assurance of the Premier that Parliament would endorse his action, and to state that an answer, yes or no, must be given within an hour. The answer was in the affirmative, and before twenty-four hours had passed, from the time when the proposal was first submitted to the British Government, a telegram had been despatched to Cairo, authorizing the purchase of all the Suez Canal shares held by the Khedive, who agreed to pay five per cent. interest on the sum advanced till such time as the shares began to participate in the profits of the canal. The arrangement proved a most advantageous one financially, as well as politically, for England. For Egypt it was far from being equally profitable. With the sale of these shares Egypt forfeited her one chance of obtaining any return whatever for the vast sums she had contributed to the construction of the canal. The result would have been the same if the shares in question had been bought by France or by any International Syndicate. Still I could have wished that,

at a later period, when an opportunity presented itself to England of redressing some of the injustice perpetrated on Egypt by the one-sided character of her relations with the Suez Canal Company, our Government could have realized that, in virtue of our previous action, Egypt had a certain moral claim to expect from England a more liberal support than that she actually received. This, however, is another story.

Nor can I perceive that Egypt got any indirect benefit from the sale of her one remaining asset in the Suez Canal other than the fact that, by the proceeds of the sale, Ismail was enabled to keep off bankruptcy for a few months longer. The shares were sold in November, 1875, and in April, 1876, the Khedive suspended payment of the bonds issued by the Egyptian Treasury.

Let me conclude this somewhat sordid portion of my narrative by an anecdote, illustrating the character of the chief actor in this financial tragedy of errors. An official, enjoying his Highness's confidence, was instructed to despatch the message announcing the Khedive's acceptance of the offer made him for the purchase of his shares. A long time was taken—or was represented as having been taken—in translating the despatch into cypher, and the interval was employed in telegraphing to private agents of the official in question, instructing them to buy heavily on his account. By the sudden rise which ensued on the purchase becoming known, the official realized a large

sum of money. On the story getting known abroad, Ismail did not display the least annoyance at what might have been considered a breach of confidence on the part of his confidant. His only comment is said to have been, " It was foolish of me not to have thought of this."

THE CREDIT SIDE OF THE ACCOUNT

Loss entailed on Egypt by Ismail's extravagance—Impossibility of ascertaining exact amount of debts incurred—Unjust charges against the bondholders—Indirect advantages derived by Egypt from Ismail's expenditure.

WHAT Egypt has lost by the burdens imposed upon her during the era of Ismail's uncontrolled command of her finances can be calculated without difficulty. At the present day the revenue of the country may be counted in round numbers at £10,000,000. Of this revenue fully one half has to be paid yearly as interest on the debt contracted by the first and greatest of the Khedives. Assuming, as a matter of theory, that under a wise and enlightened rule similar to that which Egypt has enjoyed for the last score of years, the natural resources of the country could have been developed economically, Egypt would probably now command an annual surplus of £5,000,000, which might have been employed to improve the position of the fellaheen, either directly by reducing taxation to a nominal sum, or indirectly by developing the productiveness of the land, and thereby

increasing the incomes of the present tillers of the soil. In fact, upon the hypothesis in question, the condition of the fellaheen at the present might, but for the crushing burden of the debt created by Ismail Pasha, have been the happiest of any agricultural population in the world.

It might also be contended, if the object of the contention was to show the sufferings entailed upon his country by the reckless extravagance of Ismail Pasha, that Egypt derived little or no benefit from the loans raised in her name and charged upon her resources. Of all the unsolved problems of Egyptian history not the least difficult is to explain how the money which flowed into the Egyptian Treasury between 1863 and 1869 was actually spent. There can be no question that Egypt increased her indebtedness during this period by over one hundred millions, but what became of it is still, to a great extent, matter of guesswork. No doubt the contributions made to the Suez Canal may account, in one form or another, for some eight millions; and, as I have shown, this enormous outlay brought in absolutely no return to Egypt. Again, the increase in the amount of the tribute paid by Egypt to Turkey in consideration of the decrees conferring the title of Khedive upon the Viceroy, and altering the law of succession, coupled with the additional sums paid at Constantinople to secure the consent of the Porte, may be put down as accounting for a large slice of the total. It is, or rather was, the fashion some years ago to accuse the

European bondholders of being the cause of Egypt's insolvency, owing to the usurious character of their contracts. I never could see any justification for these accusations. Of course, as in all loans contracted on doubtful security, the prices charged for interest and commission were above what may be called normal rates. But I find no evidence to show that the bondholders demanded any excessive interest for their money. Indeed, the result proved that if either lender or borrower had any just cause to complain of the terms of the contract as modified by subsequent events, it was the former, and not the latter. On the other hand, I have no doubt that the private loans contracted by the Khedive represented an amount of cash advanced far below the face value of the debt. How could it be otherwise? Almost from the commencement of his reign, Ismail was in constant need of money to meet the enormous liabilities he had undertaken. The loans raised from private individuals were, as a rule, never repaid at maturity, but had to be constantly renewed, the overdue interest being, as a rule, added to the principal. When any creditor pressed for payment, and could not be induced to renew, the money to settle his claim had to be borrowed elsewhere. In public, as in private life, when persons are living beyond their means, and paying old debts by contracting new—and larger—ones, indebtedness mounts up in a sort of geometrical progression. I am therefore quite prepared to believe that if Ismail Pasha's accounts could ever have been

investigated by an official accountant in Basinghall Street, it would have been discovered that the actual amount, for whose receipt and expenditure he could have been called upon to account, was far less than the total of the debts which could be proved against his estate. Still, after making every deduction which can reasonably be entertained, a very large sum of money, commonly estimated at not less than £50,000,000, remained unaccounted for. The most probable explanation of this deficiency was that, as long as his money lasted, he spent it in acquiring fresh lands, and in costly schemes for the development and improvement of the lands thus obtained. When Ismail ascended the throne in 1863, he only owned some 30,000 acres in Egypt. In 1877, Nubar Pasha, who knew more of the real state of affairs in Egypt than any man then living, declared to the present writer, that at the latter date the Khedive, either in his own name or in that of his family, held 1,000,000 acres of the best land in the country. What price his Highness may have paid to the original owners of whose lands he obtained possession has never been ascertained, and is now never likely to be known. Still, it may be stated with confidence that his land purchases, together with the enormous sums he expended on the sugar factories he hoped to establish, on the machinery they required, on the railroads, steamers, and barges, constructed for their service, would go far to explain the extraordinary divergence between the sums whose receipt he could not dispute

and as to the expenditure of which he was not in a position to produce any satisfactory proof.

All this any impartial critic of Ismail's reign cannot dispute. Yet, in common justice, it must also be admitted that, if the Khedive had not indulged in any ambitious schemes, or embarked in any extravagant expenditure, Egypt would never have obtained her present prosperity and security. Supposing Ismail had been a Prince of the ordinary Oriental type—self-indulgent, indolent, and easy-going, so long as his personal pleasure and comfort were left unassailed—Egypt would still be in much the same state as she was at his accession. Unintentionally, but none the less effectively, his Highness rendered two great services to his country. He brought Egypt under the eyes of Europe as a country worthy of notice, from the exploiter's point of view, and he burdened her with a debt which necessitated foreign intervention in his internal affairs. Mahomet Ali made Egypt independent of Turkey, while Ismail rendered her a dependency of England. The former, for his own ends, freed her from external tyranny; the latter, also for his own ends, freed her from the internal despotism his grandfather had established. I am inclined to think that, from the day when the Suez Canal became an accomplished fact, Egypt was bound, by the logic of facts, to pass under the control of the mistress of India. The peculiar mode, however, in which this control was established, was due in the first instance to the action of Ismail Pasha, and to the consequences

resulting from his endeavours to aggrandize himself at the expense of Europe and the cost of Egypt. In order, however, to explain the course of events by which Ismail's financial embarrassments led to the overthrow of autocratic rule in Egypt, it is necessary to recall the circumstances under which the one great statesman whom Egypt has produced brought good out of evil.

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

Nubar's arrival in Egypt—Appointed secretary to Ibrahim Pasha—Anecdotes of Ibrahim—Enters public service as manager of the State railways.

It must have been some time in the early forties when Nubar Pasha first came to Egypt. His uncle had rendered services in bygone years to the Lion of the Levant, which secured himself and his family the goodwill of Mahomet Ali after the latter had become hereditary Viceroy of Egypt. Nubar was then a young man of eighteen. He belonged to an Armenian family, engaged in trade at Smyrna, a family of good repute, but only possessed of a moderate fortune. The sons had to make their own way in the world, and did so, after the fashion of their race, by transacting for the Turkish pashas the business affairs which they were too ignorant or too indolent to transact for themselves.

Immediately on his arrival at Alexandria, Nubar obtained employment as interpreter in the Vice-regal Court. Mahomet Ali was so much impressed by the lad's ability, that, when Ibrahim, his eldest son, was

sent on a mission to Constantinople, and subsequently to Europe, Nubar, though not yet of age, was selected to accompany the Prince as secretary. Ibrahim was already subject to the fits of depression and ungovernable passion which preceded his actual insanity. I have often heard Nubar tell the story of how, when on one occasion the Prince and his staff had started on their return to Egypt from the Bosphorus, the Turkish captain warned the Christian members of the staff that the Prince had confided to him his intention of having them all put to death during the voyage. To their remark, that of course he could not carry out the commands of a madman, the captain answered, "What the Prince orders, it is my duty to execute, greatly as I should deplore the necessity." He suggested, however, that the best way of averting their fate, was to keep Ibrahim constantly in conversation during the remainder of the voyage, so as to hinder his thoughts from dwelling on his insane delusion that everybody around him was conspiring against his life. The advice was taken, and for three days and nights Nubar remained shut up in the Prince's cabin talking and reading to him without interruption, save for the few intervals when the Prince fell asleep, but never allowing his own eyes to close, and thus being always at hand to resume his task. On reaching Alexandria, he was so prostrated by physical fatigue and mental strain, that he was carried on shore senseless. One of his chief occupations, as secretary, seems to have been to read to Ibrahim at night, when

the Prince was wont to lie for hours sleepless. I know not whether it was on the voyage to which I have referred, or on some other sea journey, that an incident occurred, which illustrates at once Ibrahim's savagery and his credulity. Amongst the passengers on the Vice-regal yacht was a conjurer who, in common with all his class in the East, professed to be a necromancer and astrologer, and who was anxious to gain the confidence of the Prince. He one day obtained permission to give a performance on deck in the presence of his Highness, and in the course of the entertainment borrowed a valuable watch which the Prince had recently bought at a jeweller's in Pera, and which had had certain writing—probably a text from the Koran—inscribed on the lid. In performing a sleight-of-hand trick, the watch apparently slipped from the conjurer's fingers, fell into the sea, and sunk at once. The Prince was furious, and ordered the conjurer to be bastinadoed on the spot, and then drowned. The man, however, never lost his composure, and bade the Prince not to be alarmed, as he could recover the watch, though it might be lying fathoms deep under the ocean. After pronouncing some sort of incantation, he threw a string overboard with a bait at the end, and in the course of a few minutes drew up a live fish, unhooked it, and, tearing it open with his hands, displayed the missing watch inside the fish's stomach, unhurt, and in perfect order. The Prince was convinced that the conjurer, who could thus command the

fish of the sea, possessed magic powers, and rewarded him with the lavish liberality which, as a rule, succeeded his accesses of mad passion. The explanation, as narrated to me, was simple enough. The Pera jeweller was in league with the conjurer, and had supplied him with a watch the exact facsimile of the one recently purchased by the Prince. The duplicate was in his pocket when the original was chucked overboard; and while untastening the hook from the fish's mouth, the task of getting the watch inside the fish presented no difficulty whatever. One more ancedote of Ibrahim's relations with Nubar, and I will pass on. It so happened that during his travels in Europe, undertaken, I fancy, chiefly in the pursuit of health, Ibrahim paid a visit to the rich, fertile districts of la Bourgogne. While gazing at the broad expanse of ground, so highly cultivated, so carefully tended, so rich in variety of produce, the Prince burst into tears, and, turning to his companion, said, "It makes me weep to look at all this, and think of what Egypt might be if the soil were only cared for in the same manner." I should question greatly whether the Prince had even a dim appreciation of the fact that the prosperity of France was due in no small degree to the security and liberty possessed by the French peasant as compared with the Egyptian fellah. His grief, in as far as it was genuine, was due to the reflection, how much richer his country might be if it was administered with more intelligence and energy. To recognize this truth at all is a rare

quality amidst Oriental Princes, and its recognition seems to me to account for the kindly feeling which always actuated Nubar in speaking of the Prince, who, but for his madness and his premature death, might have left a name in Egyptian history not unworthy of Mahomet Ali's favourite son and heir.

These anecdotes serve also to explain the training which Nubar received during the years when a young man's character is formed. He was taught early to act for himself, to trust to his own intelligence, to fight his own battles, and to be confident in his power of moulding others to his will by force of his superior capacity. After Ibrahim's death, he was employed in various official capacities under both Abbas and Said. One of his earliest functions was that of being appointed to make arrangements with a British post-office agent for the conveyance of the Indian mails by the overland route from Alexandria to Suez. The agent selected was my old friend Anthony Trollope, who, though he had already begun writing novels, was still a clerk at St. Martin's-le-Grand. Again, after the retirement of Mr. Green, the brother of our then Consul-General at Cairo, from the position of manager of the State railways, Nubar was appointed to a post whose duties brought him into contact, and not unfrequently into conflict, with European residents and visitors, and especially with the English members of the Alexandrian community. Whether at any time he was a model administrator, I should doubt, from my own observation; but

he was a born diplomatist. He knew exactly what he wanted: he understood the people with whom he had to deal. He possessed, too, a quality, very rare everywhere, of being able to realize the different points of view from which the selfsame issue presents itself to the minds of men belonging to distinct races, creeds, and civilizations. Before I come to the conclusion of this narrative, which coincides, roughly speaking, with the death of Nubar in Paris, I shall endeavour to make some estimate of the standard by which he can alone be justly judged, and of the credit due to him, taking into account the difficulties of his position, for having achieved the main objects of his life's ambition. For the present, I speak of Nubar in the days when he was still only known as a valued public servant of the Egyptian Government, and as a confidential agent of the Khedive. Shortly afterwards Nubar was sent by Ismail to Constantinople to conduct the negotiations which led to the issue of the firmans conferring the title of Khedive, and the privilege of primogeniture in respect of the succession to the Vice-regal throne, upon the Viceroys of Egypt. On his return he became for the first time a Minister of State. The title of minister, which has been borrowed from Europe, is calculated, as applied to Egypt, to convey a very false impression abroad. Under the autocratic monarchies of the East, a minister, whatever his appellation may be, is simply and solely the head of a department, who holds his office on condition of his carrying out the instructions,

and retaining the favour, of the head of the State. He has no individual responsibility for the acts of his colleagues. He has not the power, even if he has the wish, to modify any policy with regard to matters lying outside his own department, of which he may happen to disapprove. I think it well to dwell on this fact, as I have often heard criticisms passed on Nubar's conduct, on the ground that, being a minister during a considerable portion of Ismail's reign, he ought to share the responsibility for the extravagant expenditure and the exorbitant exactions by which this reign was characterized. As a matter of fact, it would be about as just to say that the chief clerks in our own offices at home are responsible for the War with South Africa, because they were servants of the Government by whom the war was undertaken. If Nubar had retired from the public service in Egypt, because he disapproved of the lavish outlay rendered possible by unjustifiable taxation, he would have failed to bring about the slightest curtailment of State extravagance or any diminution of State oppression. He would also have deprived himself of any power which his position as adviser of the Khedive, in respect of foreign affairs, afforded him of employing his influence to mitigate the evil brought about by the extravagance which had burdened Egypt with a crushing public debt, and which, as a logical consequence, had necessitated the imposition of burdens heavier than the people of the country were able to bear. To put the matter more tersely, if Nubar had not remained in office

during the years which intervened between the opening of the Suez Canal and the financial collapse of 1876, the International tribunals would not have been established, and the restrictions imposed thereby upon the unlimited power of the Khedive could never have been introduced. Yet, as will be seen, it was owing to these restrictions, of which Nubar was the chief, if not the sole, author, that the ruin brought upon Egypt by the extravagance of Ismail Pasha was converted into an instrument for her salvation.

In Egypt the Capitulations remained in full force up to 1872. In virtue of these conventions, the subjects of European Powers resident in the Ottoman Empire were placed, in respect of all criminal and civil matters, under the sole jurisdiction of their own Consuls. With the sublime contempt for the Giaour which prevailed throughout Turkey in the days of Ottoman military ascendancy, the Mahometan authorities declined to trouble themselves in any way with the disputes between one set of Christian dogs and another. If any foreigner gave offence to a follower of Islam, he could always be dealt with in the good old-fashioned way. But if foreigners gave offence to one another, the dispute had best, from the point of view of the then dominant Ottoman race, be left to be settled in their own mean fashion by their own mean authorities. Such, in fact, was the origin of the Capitulations. But as years went by, as the Turks began to grow weak, and the Christians began to

grow strong, the privileges accorded by Turkey to foreigners, out of contemptuous indolence, became a source of grievance to their authors. In Egypt, as I have shown, foreigners had always been favoured by the Government since the days of Mahomet Ali. In consequence, the subjects of the great European Powers resident in the Delta attributed less value to the protection guaranteed by the Capitulations than was attached to these conventions by their fellow-countrymen residing in other provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

At the same time as the commercial relations between Europe and Egypt became more extensive and more complicated, the practical inconveniences caused by the Capitulations became more manifest. Under the system established by the Capitulations, no taxes of any kind could be imposed upon foreigners. No offence committed by foreigners could be tried before the Egyptian tribunals ; and a foreign offender could only be tried, if at all, before the Consular court of the country to which he belonged either by birth or by naturalization. Thus, if an English subject, commonly a Maltese, maltreated a native, he could only be tried, convicted, and punished, after he had been found guilty by the British Consular Court. Again, if a Greek committed a fraud, or violated any local law, he could only be brought to justice by a trial held at the Greek Consulate. It is easy to understand how this system worked, or rather failed to work. In respect of the Consular jurisdiction in criminal

matters, there was comparatively little practical grievance. The Consular agents and judges of the Great Powers were, as a rule, men of high character, and though so much could not be said of the representatives of the smaller Powers, they had—except in the rare cases, where some influential member of their own community was accused of a criminal offence—no motive for not exercising their authority justly and impartially. In respect, however, of civil offences, the Consular courts were a law unto themselves. Smuggling was, at the period of which I am treating, the most lucrative trade in Egypt, and the headquarters of this trade was Alexandria. By a convention with Turkey, the growing of tobacco or opium is forbidden in Egypt; and very heavy duties are imposed upon its importation. It followed that if tobacco or opium could be introduced into Egypt, free of duty, the profit on their sale was enormous. The *modus operandi* was of the simplest. Nothing was easier than to land a cargo on the low and thinly populated coast lying on either side of Alexandria. The time and place of landing was arranged beforehand between the shipper and the consignee. The landing effected, the cargo was packed on a string of camels, the packages were covered with piles of clover, and were then conveyed to the warehouse; and the trick was done. As I mentioned previously, Ismail Pasha, early in his reign, appointed an English officer as chief of the coastguard, and owing to this gentleman's vigilant discharge of his

duties, the landing of the cargoes was rendered more difficult than it had been hitherto. But the trade was too lucrative for the traders to be discouraged by an occasional loss. When once the cargo was stored away in a warehouse belonging to a foreigner, it was practically out of reach. The Government might have absolute knowledge as to how, and by whom, the goods had been smuggled, and where they were deposited; but the knowledge was of no avail. By the Capitulations the Egyptian police cannot effect an entrance into any dwelling owned by foreigners, except with the sanction of the occupant's Consul. If the Consul decided that there was no evidence to show the goods contained therein had not been acquired in the course of legitimate trade, there was an end of the charge; and, even if the consul admitted that the matter was open to doubt, the goods could only be seized after the alleged owner had been tried by a court composed of his fellow-countrymen, and in such a case his escape, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, was a matter of absolute certainty. The verdict once pronounced in his favour, the smuggled goods could be sold without risk at the full market price of the day. This contraband trade, I may add, was almost exclusively in the hands of the Greek and Levantine merchants at Alexandria.

Nubar, being then Minister of Foreign Affairs, obtained Ismail's consent to his making an attempt to have the Capitulations modified in favour of Egypt. The proposal recommended itself on two

grounds to the favour of the Khedive. The first was, that the removal of the practical immunity conferred by the Capitulations upon contraband trade would materially augment the revenue derived from the customs' dues; the second was, that the modification of these conventions, with the sanction of the European Powers, would be tantamount to a recognition, on the part of Europe, that Egypt under his reign had acquired the status of a civilized community. Such a recognition was obviously calculated to improve his financial credit abroad. The Capitulations, I need hardly say, exist in virtue of treaties concluded between the Porte and the various European Powers; and it is a moot question whether, if Egypt were ever to become, in name as well as in fact, independent of Turkey, the Capitulations, in as far as Egypt is concerned, would not *ipso facto* cease to exist. However this may be, the first step towards carrying out Nubar Pasha's policy was to induce Turkey to take up the idea. The Porte had no personal reason for objecting to the proposal. The contraband trade brought no direct benefit to the Ottoman revenue, while any modifications in the Capitulations, in one province of the empire, would necessarily furnish a ground for demanding similar modifications in other provinces of the Empire, a matter which the Ottoman Government had, and has, much at heart. Moreover, the principle *do ut des* is nowhere more keenly appreciated and more scrupulously observed than it is in Turkey. It was therefore

considered a matter of course that if the Porte should prove able to obtain for Egypt the favour her Government desired, the Sultan and his ministers would have to be remunerated for their trouble. This expectation, there is every reason to believe, was amply justified.

The real difficulty lay in persuading the Powers, who possessed rights accorded by the Capitulations, that it was for their own interest these rights should be restricted. It would be foreign to my purpose to enter into any discussion of the long and intricate negotiations which preceded the assent of the Powers being granted. It is enough to say that at the outset Egypt was given to understand that the jurisdiction of the Consular courts in criminal matters must be maintained in its entirety; and that any modification of their jurisdiction in civil matters could only be accorded on condition that some system could be devised under which foreigners resident in Egypt should enjoy a more trustworthy protection of their interests than they could count upon if they were made subject to the authority of any native tribunal. I fancy those stipulations were not matter for surprise to Nubar Pasha, even if they had not been indirectly suggested by him. If the memoirs which the deceased statesman has left behind him should ever see the light of day, they will confirm the statements he has often made to me, as to the general principles on which his Egyptian policy was based from the outset. He had no belief in the possibility of introducing representative

government in Egypt, or in any Oriental country. He had absolutely no sympathy with Midhat Pasha's scheme of reforming Turkey by the agency of an independent Turkish Parliament, or with any similar schemes entertained by the so-called Young Egypt party. His theory was that personal government was the only possible government, under existing conditions, for an Oriental population, and that these conditions were not likely to be materially changed within any period of which living statesmen could take account. On the other hand, he held most strongly that personal government must be subject to the supremacy of the law; that this supremacy could only exist if supported by some authority independent of, and in the last resort superior to, the will of the personal ruler; and that such support could only be provided by the presence in Egypt of a powerful European element, whose authority the ruler could not venture to dispute. As to the way in which this European element should be introduced, and as to the mode in which its authority should be exercised, his view may have varied, and did vary, with the course of events. But I am convinced, the more fully the part is known which Nubar Pasha played in Egyptian affairs, the more it will be recognized that to the above principle he remained faithful to the end.

This much is certain, that Nubar availed himself of the question of the Capitulations to lay the foundation of the reforms he had at heart. He proposed a

scheme by which the jurisdiction of the Consular courts of Egypt, in respect of all civil matters, should be transferred to an International, or, as he preferred to call it, a mixed tribunal, composed of judges nominated by the Great Powers of Europe, with the approval of the Egyptian Government, by whom their salaries were to be paid. The jurisdiction of these courts was in theory to extend only to foreigners resident in Egypt; but in practice this limitation was evaded by a provision that all suits between natives to which an European was a party, either as plaintiff or defendant, should be heard and tried before the International courts. In the vast majority of important civil cases, it was the interest of one suitor or the other to have his case pleaded before the International courts in preference to the native courts; and therefore in important cases care was taken, either by plaintiff or defendant, to interest an European in the issue of the litigation. By the adoption of this scheme, the administration of justice in respect to civil matters rests almost exclusively with tribunals entirely independent of the Egyptian Government. The judges are appointed for five years, and cannot be removed during this period except with the consent of the Power by whom they were nominated. It was also agreed that in the event of the International tribunals becoming, from any cause, unable to exercise their authority, the jurisdiction of the Consular courts in civil matters should revive of itself. By these International courts justice has been administered to the general satisfaction of the

Egyptian public, native as well as foreign, for a quarter of a century. Every five years their mandate has been renewed without serious objection on either side. Through the establishment of these courts, the first object of Nubar's policy was achieved; and from 1875 the law in Egypt has possessed an authority independent of the will of the Sovereign, however autocratic his power might be in all other respects. The permanence of this authority is further guaranteed by the fact that the International courts are virtually under the protection of the Great Powers of Christendom.

It was agreed further that the laws by which the International tribunals were to exercise their jurisdiction should be based on the Code Napoleon. As the fundamental principles of this digest are those in use, in almost every important Continental country, the decision was equitable at the time. Indeed the British Government not only made no attempt to have the code modified, so as to be in conformity with our British ideas of law, but consented without a protest to the proposal, that the language in use at the new courts should be either Arabic, French, or Italian. The net result was that in a country, destined within a few years' time to become an outpost of the British Empire, English suitors, engaged in legal proceedings before these International courts, had, and still have, to plead their case in French, and to be represented by lawyers conversant with French law. A committee, however, was appointed to introduce such

modifications into the Code Napoleon as were required by the exceptional circumstances of Egypt. In the code, as modified for the use of Egypt, a clause was introduced, which attracted, in as far as I can learn, no attention at the time. By the clause in question it is provided that an action may lie on the part of any foreigner against the Government, and that if judgment should be given in his favour, the judgment must be carried into execution by the Government itself. Such a provision is not to be found in any other civilized country. In England it is impossible for native or foreigner to bring an action against the Government for any alleged torts. Even if by any conceivable possibility a suitor could obtain a verdict, as against his Majesty's Government, in a British court, he would have no power, as a matter of right, to call upon the executive to enforce payment of any judgment given against the Crown by the seizure of State property through the agency of State officials. If the clause in question had been deliberately framed with the object of bringing the Khedive himself under the action of the law, as administered by the International tribunals, it could not have been more ingeniously worded. I entertain little doubt that the clause was inserted, directly, or more probably indirectly, at Nubar's instigation. But, intentionally or unintentionally, the introduction of such a clause into the Egyptian code carried out the second object Nubar had in view—that of curtailing the Khedive's power of contracting debts in the name of Egypt—

by rendering this power subject to the authority of an independent tribunal. How this clause was made use of later on, to bring about Ismail's deposition, I shall have to relate in its proper place. But I may as well mention here an incident which bears on the subject.

Shortly after the International courts had begun to function, the late Mr. John Horatio Lloyd, so well known as a high legal authority and as the inventor of Lloyd's bonds, came out to Egypt to act as adviser to the contractors for the Alexandrian break-water, who were desirous of coming to some definite settlement of their claims against the Egyptian Government. In the course of his interviews with the Khedive, his Highness asked him as a favour to look at the clause of the code to which I have referred, and to give an opinion as to its practical bearing. After studying the code, Mr. Lloyd reported to the Khedive that under the clause any foreign creditor might obtain judgment, certainly, against the Government, and probably against himself as Khedive, and might call upon the executive to enforce the judgment by levying execution on any seizable property belonging either to the State or to the Sovereign. Upon hearing this, Ismail displayed the most intense indignation, whether real or simulated, declared he had been betrayed and deceived, and said, that sooner than have signed acceptance of the code, if he had understood its real bearing, he would have cut off his right hand. When Mr. Lloyd told me

this incident shortly after its occurrence, I remember asking him whether he thought the Khedive was stating what he believed, or what he wished to have believed. He evaded the question by saying, "Well, you see it is difficult to cross-examine a royal personage in his own palace. Why, to-day, our friend here—turning to the late Sir George Elliot—begged me to inform His Highness that 'he must act upon the square,'" and though I quite agreed with the sentiment, I was unable, though I am tolerably well conversant with French, to think of any French equivalent for "acting upon the square."

Later on, I shall have more to say on the part played by Nubar in Egyptian politics. For the present I am concerned only with his action when he was comparatively an unknown man outside of Egypt, and when Ismail was still at the summit of his power. I do not hesitate to say that no other man but Nubar could have succeeded in inducing the European Powers to surrender their rights under the Capitulations, and in persuading the Khedive to sanction the establishment of the International courts. Throughout all the negotiations at Cairo, Constantinople, London, Paris, and Berlin, Nubar displayed an ability which impressed all the statesmen and diplomatists with whom he was brought into contact. From that time forward he was recognized by all the chief Governments of Europe as the leading statesman of the Orient. Up to the end of his life, Nubar never forgot the fact that during the period when he was

working for the regeneration of Egypt, as well as for the establishment of his own influence, he met with the most loyal and constant support from England, and with the most persistent opposition from France.

THE CAVE MISSION

Mr. Cave arrives in Egypt on special mission from the British Government—Origin of the mission—General impression in Egypt that mission intended to arrange for a British Protectorate—Probable explanation of causes which led to the abrupt termination of the mission—Mr. Cave leaves Egypt and issues his report—The Khedive thereupon suspends payment.

THE purchase by Great Britain of the Suez Canal shares was effected in the course of November, 1875. In the course of a few weeks it became known that the four millions paid to the Khedive had only sufficed to liquidate a small portion of his liabilities, and that, if he could not obtain further pecuniary aid, the only course open to him consisted in repudiation. When I say this was known, I do not mean generally known. Up to the very last, the great majority of the foreign residents in Egypt felt confident that somehow or other the Khedive would meet his liabilities. The common impression was that he could always rely on the assistance of France. This impression was not solely due to the wish being father to the thought. The French public had invested very largely in Egyptian securities. The Credit Fancier

and other large financial establishments in Paris were reported to hold colossal amounts of these securities; and it was commonly imagined that the French Government could not afford to run the risk of the panic which must ensue from any repudiation by Egypt of her foreign liabilities. The third Republic was then far less firmly established than it became at a later period; and any catastrophe which excited popular indignation in the then temper of the French nation might conceivably have led to a monarchical restoration. It was, however, obvious, that if France consented to save Egypt from bankruptcy, the requisite advances could only be made subject to some arrangement under which the financial administration of Egypt would virtually be placed under French officials; and as in Egypt finance and politics are synonymous terms, it followed that if France financed Egypt, she would also become the paramount Power in Egyptian politics. Now, this was exactly the contingency which England, under the Disraeli administration of 1875, was anxious to avert. Colonel Stanton, our Consul-General, was fully aware of the negotiations going on between Cairo and Paris, and kept our Foreign Office acquainted with what was taking place. I do not profess to have any personal knowledge of the inner history of the Cave Mission. I happen to know, however, the first origin of this abortive mission, which may not unfitly be described as a story without an end. In 1875, some months before our purchase of the Suez Canal shares, the then Prince of Wales passed through

Egypt on his way to India. During the Prince's visit to Cairo, the Khedive intimated to His Royal Highness, through the medium of Sir Bartle Frere, who was one of the Prince's party, his wish to have an English official appointed by her Majesty's Government to advise the Egyptian Treasury. The Khedive was informed that any wish of this kind must be submitted through her Majesty's Consul-General at Cairo, as the official representative of the Government. Subsequent to the Prince's departure, a letter to this effect was forwarded to the Foreign Office. No direct response was given at the time; but apparently our Government availed themselves of this suggestion a few months later, when Mr. Stephen Cave, M.P., was despatched on a general mission of inquiry into the finances of Egypt. The despatch of such a mission was certainly not what Ismail had asked for, and still less what he desired. If there was one thing he dreaded, it was a genuine investigation of his own financial position. The avowed object of the mission, as explained at the time, was to institute a preliminary inquiry, whose result would enable her Majesty's Government to determine whether they could accede to the Khedive's request for the appointment of an English official as a financial adviser to the Egyptian Treasury. Nubar Pasha, who at this period was still hostile to the idea of any direct European intervention, stated to me, some years later, that when Mr. Cave called on him on his arrival, and informed him of the purport of his mission,

he said with almost brutal frankness, "Under these circumstances, I think you would have done better not to have come at all." Instructions were sent privately to the Egyptian ministers to give no information to the British envoy. The Khedive professed absolute ignorance about the finances of Egypt, and referred all inquiries to the Mufettish.

Whenever the papers entrusted to Lord Rowton's care are made public property, I presume the truth will be made known. But I am justified in assuming that there was some motive for the sudden resolution of her Majesty's Government to send out a special mission to Egypt in order to investigate the financial position of Egypt, other than a desire to obtain accurate information on a matter which was not apparently any concern of England. Having been in Cairo at the time of the Cave Mission, I can vouch for the prevalence of an impression in Egypt that the mission was sent out with the view of bringing about an arrangement under which England, on condition of her assuming the financial liabilities of the Khedivial Government, should take upon herself the Protectorate of Egypt. I have reason to believe that when the mission arrived, Ismail Pasha and his entourage imagined it would result in some arrangement of the kind I have indicated. Mr. Cave was then Judge Advocate-General, and therefore not a member of the Cabinet, but only a subordinate member of the Ministry. The distinctions, however, of ministerial rank in England were, and are, very imperfectly understood abroad; and the bare fact that

a British minister had been sent out on purpose to investigate the financial position of Egypt was regarded as proof positive that the British Government contemplated some form of direct intervention. Up to the present day the world at large has never been able to discover what were the exact instructions, if any, with which the Cave Mission was despatched to Cairo. It is obvious, however, that the solvency or insolvency of Egypt was a matter, at this period, which chiefly, if not solely, concerned England in its political—not in its financial—aspects. Mr. Cave was a sensible, level-headed man, who, except that he had been, I believe, at one time a sleeping partner in an old-established provincial bank, had no special experience of finance. At all events, it was not as a financier, but as the chosen envoy of the British Government, that he was welcomed in Egypt. The palace of the Foresteria in the Shoubra Road—then the fashionable promenade of Cairo—the residence reserved usually for Royal visitors to Egypt, was made ready for his reception. He came accompanied with a regular staff, and was treated, by the orders of the Khedive, with every distinction due to an envoy of a great and friendly Power entrusted with a special mission. The well-nigh universal impression in Cairo at the time was that Mr. Cave had been deputed to discuss the terms on which England might be prepared to take upon herself the liabilities contracted by the Khedive in the name of Egypt. It was generally believed that this impression was shared by

the Khedive, and that he was prepared to consider favourably the proposals which he anticipated would be made to him by Mr. Cave on behalf of the British Government. Considerable disappointment was felt at Abdin, when, during his interviews with the Khedive, Mr. Cave confined himself entirely to inquiries as to the financial position of Egypt, and said little or nothing as to any ulterior objects which the British Ministry might have in view.

I have always thought Mr. Cave did not receive the credit he deserved for his discharge of a very difficult and thankless task. I fancy that on his arrival in Egypt he contemplated a far more prolonged and exhaustive study of the subject he was sent to investigate. But after a few weeks' sojourn, he came —or at any rate professed to have come—to the conclusion, that his report must be based on the information supplied to him by the Khedive, the Mufettish, and the officials of the Egyptian Treasury, and that he had neither the time nor the means of testing the accuracy of the information thus supplied. This information, he may reasonably have held, was likely to prove trustworthy, from the fact that, at this period of his fortunes, it was not the interest of Ismail Pasha to under-estimate his financial difficulties, as his chief reason for hoping that England might come to his assistance lay in representing his liabilities as being of such a character as to compel him to accept French intervention, in case England declined to intervene for his salvation. Mr. Cave declared his

determination to draw up a preliminary report, which might be supplemented afterwards by further investigations, if her Majesty's Government considered it advisable. He thereupon left Egypt after only a few weeks' sojourn.

The actual truth about this curious episode in Anglo-Egyptian history is probably contained in the private papers left by Lord Beaconsfield. But, judging from the facts, in as far as they are known, it is impossible, to my mind, to avoid the conclusion that Mr. Cave's mission, following, as it did, on the heels of our acquisition of an immense interest in the Suez Canal—on terms which, at the time, were not regarded, at home or abroad, as likely to prove remunerative to the purchaser—was intended by its author to lead up to the establishment of a British Protectorate over Egypt. The then Mr. Disraeli was a statesman singularly reticent, even with his own colleagues, and I think it more than probable that what I may call the inner meaning of the Cave Mission was not communicated to the other members of the Ministry at the time when the mission was appointed. When, however, an impression gained ground that the mission was intended to pave the way for the establishment of a British Protectorate over Egypt, the proposal met with vigorous opposition from the Liberal party, and with lukewarm support from the Conservatives. It is my aim in this narrative to avoid party politics as much as possible. The plain truth is that, up to a very recent period, neither

Liberals nor Conservatives have had any definite policy with regard to Egypt. Nothing amuses me more than to read in foreign newspapers, and especially in the French press, denunciations of the astuteness with which England has plotted persistently, and of set purpose, to convert Egypt into a dependency of the British Empire. Having been to some extent behind the scenes in relation to Anglo-Egyptian affairs, I can say with confidence that every leading British statesman on either side, with the exception of Lord Beaconsfield, was more or less hostile to the idea of our annexing Egypt. Even when, at the height of his authority, Lord Beaconsfield contemplated, as I believe, the virtual annexation of Egypt, he soon found out that the disfavour with which the idea was received by his own followers must be fatal to its execution. My own surmise is that Mr. Cave had no specific instructions when he came out to Egypt beyond a general intimation that his report on the financial position, if it proved favourable, might possibly lead to further action on the part of her Majesty's Government. I can only explain the sudden and unexpected termination of his mission by the theory that, while he was engaged in prosecuting his inquiries, he received an intimation from home that no further action of any kind was contemplated, and that, therefore, the sooner the inquiry could be brought to a close, the better for all parties concerned.

Under these circumstances, the report Mr. Cave issued on his return fell still-born, though it is fair to say that subsequent experience has more than confirmed the general correctness of Mr. Cave's figures. Mr. Cave's report may be briefly summarized as follows: After stating that it was based on figures furnished by the Khedive and his officials, the accuracy of which it was impossible to test with the time and means at his disposal, but whose substantial correctness he was inclined to accept, he declared that the financial embarrassments of Egypt were due to lavish waste and expenditure; to great works undertaken with inadequate means; to an enormous military expenditure, uncalled for by the needs of the country; to the exploitation of Egyptian resources by concessions granted to adventurers, chiefly of foreign extraction, who had got the ear of the Khedive. He gave it as his opinion that the financial position of Egypt was not hopelessly compromised, but might be restored if her credit could be re-established, and her expenditure restricted, and he concluded by saying that these objects could only be obtained by the intervention of some foreign Power. To put the matter briefly, Mr. Cave's report would have formed an excellent defence for the policy which, as I suggest, was originally intended to be based upon the result of his investigations. In the interval, however, between the despatch of the mission and the publication of the report, the Prime Minister had come to the conclusion that the policy was impracticable, owing to the

opposition of his colleagues, and had therefore to be abandoned. I am not aware how far Ismail Pasha was cognizant of the purport of this report before its formal publication ; but as soon as he discovered that the report, though favourable in the main, did not recommend any direct British intervention with the view of saving Egypt from bankruptcy, he made up his mind to the inevitable. The Cave report appeared on the 23rd of March, 1876, and on the following 8th of April the Khedive suspended payment of the interest due upon the Treasury bonds issued during his reign.

I believe that Ismail Pasha would have hesitated much longer about resorting to repudiation if he had not been encouraged by the example of Turkey. In October, 1875, the Ottoman Treasury had suspended payment, and up to the spring of 1876 no action to enforce payment had been taken by the European Powers. The Khedive felt confident he could rely on the same impunity as the Sultan, and was fully convinced that if he could once wipe out his debts and replenish his empty Treasury with the revenues which were appropriated to the service of the public debt, he would have no difficulty in finding fresh facilities as a borrower. In finance, even more than in most things, half-knowledge is worse than ignorance.

FIRST STAGE OF INTERVENTION

Proposal to establish a State bank—Nubar quits Egypt for Europe—Ismail arbitrarily consolidates State Debts and fixes rate of interest—His Highness proposes appointment of an International Commission of the Public Debt—Bondholders demand further investigation before approving the proposal—Messrs. Goschen and Joubert selected to conduct investigation—Goschen-Joubert report—Arrest and death of the Mufettish.

THE failure of the hopes based on the prospect of British intervention rendered repudiation inevitable. I should doubt, however, whether Ismail at this period had yet become seriously alarmed at the outlook of affairs. Up to a very short period before the publication of the report, he had been sanguine as to the possibility of escaping, or, at all events, of postponing, any financial crisis. During the period of the Cave Mission, Cairo was crowded with foreign visitors, who represented, or claimed to represent, groups of European financiers. Neither the agents nor their principals stood in the front ranks of International finance. They were all confident of their power to raise any amount of money that might be required to put Egypt, financially speaking, on her legs, provided always Ismail Pasha could offer such guarantees as, whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory in themselves, would induce European investors to subscribe to the

loans they proposed to issue for public subscription. It was, of course, understood on both sides that the commission to the promoters was to err, if at all, on the side of liberality. Out of many competing schemes suggested at this period, the one which met with most acceptance was the proposed establishment of a State bank, into whose custody all monies received by the State should be handed, and from whose funds all payments due from the State were to be paid. It was thought that if the management of the bank was placed in the hands of officials nominated by the Great Powers, an arrangement of this character would restore the credit of Egypt, while it would be acceptable to these Powers, owing to the fact that it involved the assumption of no direct pecuniary responsibility on their part. The negotiations, however, for the erection of a State bank, were abandoned when it became clear that England was not prepared at that period to undertake any pecuniary responsibility, direct or indirect, in respect of Egypt. Ismail, at this period, doubtless imagined that the same jealousies which had prevented any joint action of the European Powers for the protection of the creditors of the Ottoman Empire would operate to prevent any action of a like kind being taken in the case of Egypt. Moreover, he entertained a profound and not ill-grounded confidence in his own ability to play off one Power against another—England against France, and Germany against both. At this time he had lost the services of Nubar, who had

resigned office during the Cave Mission. The immediate cause of his resignation was that Ismail Pasha had become suspicious as to his relations with Mr. Cave. Everything which concerns affairs of State becomes rapidly known in Egypt, and the rumour got about that, notwithstanding the obstacles placed in his way, Mr. Cave had elicited a good deal of information concerning the indissoluble financial connection between the State and the Khedive—a connection which the latter was anxious to keep in the background. Nubar, as the Khedive had reason to be aware, possessed the information in question, and it was only in accordance with the Khedive's character that he should suspect any one, who possessed valuable information, of being prepared to use it for his own ends and purposes. Anyhow, while the Commission was sitting, Nubar received a letter from his Highness requesting him to retain the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, but to resign that of Commerce. Thereupon Nubar seized the opportunity to sever his connection with the Ministry and to quit Egypt on the plea of health. I have no doubt, however, his real motive lay in his knowledge that Ismail only awaited some excuse to repudiate his debts, and in his desire not to be mixed up with the approaching financial crisis.

Meanwhile Ismail Pasha took matters with a high hand. By a decree, issued a month after his suspension of payment on the Treasury bonds, he declared that all his various debts must be consolidated into

one public debt of £91,000,000, bearing 7 per cent. interest. If there had been any reason to suppose this compromise would be carried out, the foreign bondholders would have accepted it gladly. Unfortunately, confidence had been shattered. If Ismail claimed the right to fix for himself the amount in which he was indebted to his creditors, and the interest he should pay them for their loans, what possible reliance could be placed upon his promises? If he was once allowed to determine the extent of his own liabilities, he might, whenever he found it inconvenient to fulfil his engagements, reduce again, by a fresh decree, the amount of his indebtedness and the rate of interest he was prepared to pay. Moreover, the compromise, whose acceptance Ismail Pasha, in his character of an insolvent debtor, proposed to enforce upon his creditors, gave great umbrage to the bondholders. By the consolidation of all his liabilities into one huge debt, the holders of Treasury bonds issued by the Khedive were placed on exactly the same footing as the holders of the State bonds issued to the investors in the various State loans. The holders of the floating debt were mainly French; the holders of the State bonds were chiefly English. In consequence, the Unification decree was not unfavourably received in Paris; but it was vehemently attacked in London, as giving an unfair advantage to the French creditors at the expense of the British. Nor was this hostility removed by a formal declaration accompanying the decree to the effect that no further

Treasury bonds were to be issued in future. It is one of the cherished traditions of British statesmanship that the Government has no responsibility whatever for loans that may be made by British investors in foreign securities. There is, I admit, a good deal to be said for the theory, but I never could understand why British officials and British diplomatists should consider they give proof of exceptional devotion to duty by declining to bestir themselves in any way to protect the interests of British subjects who have sustained losses abroad by the action of foreign governments. It has always seemed to my mind that the first duty of any government is to look after the interests of its own people. These ideas, however, were completely out of fashion in the days when the late Lord Derby was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The bondholders were told that as they had chosen to invest money in Egypt, they must bear the consequences, and must look for no help from her Majesty's Ministers. Such was the decision of Downing Street, and from that decision there was no appeal.

Happily, however, for the British bondholders, the French Government took a different view of their duty, or their interest—whichever one may please to call it—in respect of the French bondholders. The Khedive shortly followed up his act of repudiation by proposing the appointment of a Commission of the Public Debt, which was to have no administrative power, but was to assist the Egyptian Government

with its advice on all questions concerning the finances of the State, an advice which, it was assumed by the author of the proposal, must necessarily command his respectful attention. The members of this Commission were to be nominated by the Powers whose subjects were interested in Egyptian securities. A proposal to this effect was addressed to the Governments of France, Austria, Italy, and England. The then Minister of Foreign Affairs in France went out of his way to state, on the application being made to him officially, that "he felt no difficulty whatever on the subject." But Lord Derby, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, took a completely different view, and declined to nominate any British Commissioner, on the ground that the financial arrangement, which the Commission was to assist in carrying into execution, did not commend itself to the approval of her Majesty's Government. The excuse was in itself valid enough. But I am strongly of opinion that, if so good a plea for refusal had not been forthcoming, some other plea would have been discovered. Lord Derby, though a Conservative in name, was then, and I think remained to the end, an adherent of Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy, and an opponent of the foreign policy of Mr. Disraeli. I happened to meet him out one evening shortly before his resignation, and in the course of a conversation on foreign affairs, he suddenly remarked in that slow, sleepy voice of his, which always sounded as if he was speaking to himself, not to his hearer, "Well,

whatever happens, I am not going to be a filibuster." By disposition, as well as by conviction, he was hostile to the ideas which underlie Imperialism, and he was so especially in virtue of his official training. France, as I have said, consented at once to nominate a member of the proposed Commission; Austria and Italy followed suit. England stood aloof; but in order to secure the presence of an English representative on the Commission, the Khedive selected Major Evelyn Baring (now Lord Cromer) as the British member of the Public Debt Commission.

It is impossible to understand the course of the events which intervened between Ismail's repudiation of his debts and his subsequent dethronement, unless one realizes the plain fact that his whole policy was based on the maintenance of his own personal government. In respect of external affairs, he was ready to accept the control of a foreign power in return for the moral, if not the financial, support required to re-establish his damaged credit. But in internal affairs he was resolved to remain, at all costs and all hazards, the Effendina, the absolute Lord and Master of his subjects, and of their lives and properties. Notwithstanding his singular intelligence, he shared with all Oriental rulers an utter inability to understand the nature of constitutional government, as established in Western and Northern Europe. That foreign Governments were ever actuated by any other motive than that of promoting their own personal interests was to him a thing absolutely unintelligible. I have no doubt

that when he contemplated the acceptance of a British Protectorate, he felt convinced that, so long as the interest on the debt was duly paid, and the special interests of England, as the mistress of India, were secured under the Protectorate, he would be given a free hand to govern or misgovern Egypt as seemed wise in his own sight. The protecting Power, according to the Khedive's conception, was to look after its own interests in Egypt; and personal government was to go on there in every other respect as it had done heretofore. In accordance with the same order of ideas, he offered to appoint the Commission of the Public Debt in the hope that its appointment might seem to the European public to constitute a sort of International Control; while in reality it was not to concern itself with anything beyond matters of account. Entertaining, as he did, a profound conviction of the innate superiority of Eastern to Western statecraft—using the word in its literal sense—he felt assured he could easily keep the Commission from knowing anything he did not wish them to know, while he was confident that, even if ugly facts came to their knowledge, they would not interfere with matters which, in his opinion, were nobody's business but his own.

When the Public Debt Commission came into operation the Khedive soon discovered that his anticipations were not likely to be realized. He had overlooked the fact that, though the Commissioners, in their capacity as representatives of England,

France, Austria, and Italy, might have different political ends to serve, they had one common interest, namely, that of securing the regular payment of the dividends due to the bondholders. The most superficial acquaintance with the economical conditions of Egypt was sufficient to convince any man of ordinary intelligence, that the first step towards the restoration of Egyptian credit was the separation of the revenues and expenditure appertaining to the State from those appertaining to the Khedive in his personal capacity. The efforts of the Commission were therefore directed to ascertaining what portion of the revenues belonged by rights to the State, and what to the Khedive. Any investigation, however, of such a kind was fatal to the theory of Ismail Pasha that he was to remain the sole administrator of Egypt, and that the Commissioners had no right to inquire into the mode in which the revenue was collected and expended, provided the interest on the public debt were duly forthcoming. Moreover, his Highness discovered, to his astonishment, that the Commissioners, as a body, did not consider their duty was fulfilled if they could be shown that the next dividend was duly provided for, but held that it was also their duty to discover whether the taxes were collected and their outcome expended in accordance with the welfare of Egypt, and, in consequence, with the interests of the bondholders. The Commissioners found themselves encountered with every sort of open, and still more of secret, opposition, as soon as

they tried to bring daylight into the administration of Egyptian affairs. The opposition they experienced got noised abroad, and strengthened the distrust entertained by the foreign bondholders as to Ismail Pasha's having the will, even if he had the power, to carry out the composition he had imposed upon his creditors without their consent.

Before, however, the Commission had commenced its work, the demand on the part of the bondholders for a further inquiry into the financial position of the Khedive became too strong to be resisted. Meetings were held both in Paris and London, urging the necessity of an independent investigation. M. Joubert was selected to undertake the duty of looking into the finances of Egypt by the Duc de Cazes, who was then Foreign Minister of the French Republic; while Mr. Goschen was nominated by the British bondholders to accompany M. Joubert as his colleague. If I am correctly informed, Mr. Goschen volunteered to undertake a very thankless and arduous task. On his accession to office, he had severed his connection with the great financial house founded by his father, and had a strong personal objection to identifying himself in any way with financial affairs. He held, however, that, as a member of the firm by whom the first Egyptian loan had been floated on the London market, the English bondholders had a certain moral claim upon his services. His offer to investigate the financial position of Egypt, in conjunction with M. Joubert, a very well known

and popular Parisian financier, but belonging to a very different category of the *haute finance* from that of his English colleague, was gladly approved by the British Government, but no official sanction of any kind was given to his mission. A comic element, as Lord Milner observes in his pleasant description of Egypt as "the land of paradox," is always associated with the gravest events of its contemporary history, and to any one who, in common with the present writer, has had the advantage of knowing personally the two members of the Goschen-Joubert mission, there is something humorous in the conjunction together of two men who were in all respects so different to each other, as the jovial, genial, not over scrupulous, and certainly not too refined French financier, who was up to his neck in every sort of speculation, good, bad, and indifferent, and the cautious, high-minded English gentleman, imbued with all the traditions of Oxford and all the ideas of old-fashioned city capitalists. However, unlike as they were in every other respect, the two delegates had this much in common, that they were both men of strong common sense, and both, on this occasion, equally anxious to do their best for the bondholders whose interests they were charged with defending. The accounts of the Egyptian Treasury were again submitted to a second and a more exhausting examination than the one which Mr. Cave had been in a position to conduct, and the result of this examination was that Messrs.

Goschen and Joubert came to the conclusion that the funded debt of Egypt ought to be fixed at £59,000,000, and that the interest on this debt should be reduced from 7 per cent. to 6 per cent.

In order to explain the extraordinary discrepancy between the Egyptian debt as calculated by the Khedive on the one hand and by Messrs. Goschen and Joubert on the other, it may be well to state that the former estimate threw the whole debt of Egypt into hotch-potch, while the latter drew a distinction between the debts secured by the general revenues of the country and other debts, which were guaranteed by special ear-marked securities, such as the Daira lands, the State railway receipts, and the dues of the ports of Alexandria.

This settlement, if accepted by the bondholders, was to be accompanied by an agreement on the part of the Khedive to Europeanize the administration of Egypt, to place the finances of the State under the supervision of two Controllers nominated respectively by the French and the English Governments, and to entrust the management of the State railways to an Anglo-French Board, assisted by a native Commissioner. It was further stipulated, that if the British Government should still decline to nominate an English Controller and an English member of the Railway Board, these posts should be filled by the selection of English officials of high standing on the advice of Mr. Goschen. The Controller nominated by France was the Baron de Malaret.

Lord Derby, as usual, declined to accept any responsibility, and, at the request of the Khedive, Mr. Goschen suggested the appointment of Mr. Romaine, formerly Judge Advocate-General, as British Controller, and of General Marriott, who had previously held an important position in the administration of the State railways in India, as British member of the Egyptian Railway Board. No objection to these appointments was raised at the Foreign Office. The Goschen arrangement was accepted with enthusiasm at a meeting of the Egyptian bondholders in London, and for a short interval there seemed a prospect of a condition of financial equilibrium being restored in Egypt.

On the eve, however, of the so-called Goschen decree being promulgated, an incident occurred which must have raised doubts as to the stability of any composition between the Khedive and his creditors, so long as his Highness retained the power of absolute personal government.

During the discussions between the envoys of the bondholders and the Khedive, Ismail Sadyk, the Mufettish, was the official mouthpiece of the Egyptian Government. He remained the right hand of Ismail Pasha up to the date of his downfall. The whole story of his dismissal and his death was wrapt up in a mystery which has never yet been cleared up. Let me first repeat the story as it was told me at the time of its occurrence. As I have already mentioned, the Khedive, in

the decree by which he had instituted the Commission of the Public Debt, had engaged to contract no fresh debts without the knowledge and sanction of the Commissioners. In the course of their examination into the State accounts, the envoys had made the discovery that a number of duplicate bonds were in existence, which had apparently been issued subsequent to the date when this pledge had been given. Thereupon Mr. Goschen asked Ismail how he could account for the existence of these duplicate bonds. His Highness replied that there must be some clerical blunder, that all financial transactions were carried on entirely by the Mufettish, and that he would give instructions to the Minister to call on Mr. Goschen on the next day, when the error would be explained to his satisfaction. Either on the same, or the following, morning the Khedive had an interview with the Mufettish, and subsequently drove with him to the Gesireh palace, which has since been turned into an hotel. His Highness, according to common report, entered the palace, asking Ismail Sadyk to await his return. Immediately afterwards, the Mufettish was seized by a guard of soldiers, and forced to embark upon one of the Vice-regal steamers lying off the quays of the palace. Within a few hours an official announcement was published, stating that Ismail Sadyk had been discovered to be engaged in a treasonable conspiracy for the overthrow of the dynasty, and that for the safety of the State he had been exiled to the Soudan. A few days later, news

arrived from Dongola that Ismail Sadyk, who had been drinking hard from the time he set foot on board the vessel carrying him into exile, had died suddenly from a stroke of apoplexy, and had been buried at Dongola. The affair caused great excitement in Cairo; and in order to dispel the rumours current in the bazaars, two European doctors were despatched to Dongola to hold a *post-mortem* examination. The doctors, whose good faith there was no ground to suspect, reported that they had examined a corpse, represented to be that of the Mufettish, which had been buried at Dongola, and that the deceased had died a natural death. The identity, however, of the corpse with that of the late Minister of Finance was not established as clearly as could have been desired. Nor did the allegation, that he had been engaged in any treasonable conspiracy against the Khedivial dynasty, meet with much credence. It was known to his colleagues that ever since the commencement of the Goschen-Joubert inquiry into the finances of Egypt, the unfortunate Minister had been greatly alarmed by a conviction that the true causes of Egyptian indebtedness must infallibly be brought to light; that he had urged his Highness to have the whole facts of the financial position laid before the envoys; and that he was open to the suspicion of contemplating full disclosures on his own account, in the event of the Khedive's refusing to follow his advice. In the opinion of an Oriental ruler, and especially a ruler

of Ismail's character, such action as that which the Mufettish was supposed to have contemplated would be regarded as tantamount to a treasonable conspiracy. Ismail Sadyk was a man so universally detested for his greed and cruelty, that, according to Oriental opinion, he deserved any fate which may have befallen him. His palace was pillaged by the orders of the Government, his property appropriated, and his family left for the time almost destitute. Whether he had really conspired or not, where, how, and when he had died, remained unknown. He had for years been the favourite of the Effendina; he had lost his lord and master's favour; and if he disappeared suddenly, his disappearance appeared as natural to the Egyptians of the day as the hanging of the baker and the restoration of the butler to Pharaoh's favour, as recorded in Holy Writ, seemed to their forefathers in the days of Joseph.

Various stories were current in Cairo at the time which increased the excitement caused by the mystery of the Mufettish's death. In the course of the evening which followed his arrest, two messengers were despatched from the palace with orders to communicate with the Vice-regal yacht. The first messenger was an officer, who was instructed to bring back the official seal of the Khedive which Sadyk Pasha had been entrusted with as Minister of Finance. The officer returned without the seal, but with his hand cruelly torn and lacerated. On his return empty-handed, a second officer was sent on a mission, whose object was

never disclosed. In the course of a few hours he came back in a state of such violent physical and mental agitation, that he had to be placed at once under medical care, and remained in confinement for three months before he recovered his senses. These and many similar reports, or rather the interpretations placed upon them, may be utterly baseless. I give them only as illustrating the state of popular agitation in Cairo at the time of this catastrophe. The one thing certain is that after the death of the Mufettish, whenever and however it may have occurred, nothing was ever heard again of the alleged conspiracy against the dynasty. The secret, if secret there was, lies buried with Ismail Sadyk along the banks, or in the waters, of the Nile.

It is right to add that Mr. Goschen, when, on his return to London, he addressed a meeting of the Egyptian bondholders, seems to have been of opinion that the Khedive was not open to any suspicion of having benefited by the malpractices of his confidential agent and adviser. In this speech the Mufettish was depicted "as the main author or instrument of Egypt's great financial maladministration." Mr. Goschen accused the ex-minister, no doubt, with perfect truth,

"of having sold the wheat and cotton paid in kind for State taxes before delivery, and of having re-sold the same products a second time so as to receive the price twice over; with having carried on, on his own account, an enormous bear operation in Egyptian State stocks, shortly after their rise upon the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by the British

Government; of falsifying the prices credited to the State, and of putting the differences into his own pockets; and of having issued bonds to the exent of £5,000,000 which he had no right to issue, and on which he had borrowed large sums of money."

From the wording of Mr. Goschen's speech, it would appear that these disclosures, when made by him to the Khedive, came upon his Highness as a surprise. At the same time, Mr. Goschen went out of his way to express regret that the Mufettish had been dismissed from his post, not on account of financial maladministration, but on a charge of conspiracy.

SECOND STAGE OF INTERVENTION

Ismail proposes a compromise to the creditors of Egypt and issues a decree appointing Commission of the Public Debt — Proposal accepted by France, Austria, and Italy—England refuses to nominate a member of the Commission —Compromise rejected by French bondholders—International courts declare compromise invalid—Egyptian defeat in war with Abyssinia—Action of Nubar Pasha in Europe—Appointment of Commission of Inquiry—Publication of article in *Nineteenth Century*—True causes of Egyptian debt.

THE respite afforded to Ismail Pasha by the Goschen-Joubert settlement proved of very short duration. The settlement had made no provision for some £50,000,000 of unfunded debts. In as far as I can learn, the theory on which the distinction between the funded and unfunded debts was based, was that the former were contracted, however imprudently, for State purposes, and that the latter were incurred to meet the private requirements of the Khedive. But, if I have made my meaning clear, Egypt and the Viceroy were so completely identified with one another, under the system first established by Mahomet Ali, that no power, short of omniscience, could decide where the liabilities of Egypt ended or where the liabilities of the Khedive commenced. Messrs. Goschen and

Joubert, as envoys of the bondholders, considered with justice that their first duty was to protect the interests of their clients. They were probably of opinion that the amount of the floating debt had been swollen by all sorts of bogus claims; that the great majority of these claims would not stand any serious investigation; and that the Khedive and his private creditors could come to some reasonable arrangement between themselves. Moreover, they had no authority to effect a settlement of the unfunded debts, and they were perfectly well aware that they could look for no active support from their respective governments so long as England adhered to her policy of absolute non-intervention. In all likelihood, these expectations might have been realized if Ismail had still possessed the same uncontrolled authority as he held up to midsummer, 1875, when he had presided at the opening of the International tribunals. Lord Randolph Churchill, shortly after his resignation, used to say, in defence of his abortive resignation, "It would have been a success if I had not forgotten the existence of Mr. Goschen." Lord Randolph's successor, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, might justify the failure of the Goschen settlement by paraphrasing this saying, and declaring "that his financial scheme would have been a success if he had not forgotten the existence of the International tribunals." The oversight, if oversight there was, can easily be excused. At the period when the so-called Goschen decree was issued, the legal position of these tribunals was not

fully realized, while there was grave reason to doubt how far, in the event of any conflict between their authority and that of the Khedive, they could rely on foreign intervention to uphold their jurisdiction.

As soon, however, as the floating-debt creditors discovered that, by the decree in question, they were left out in the cold, they instituted suits before the International courts. I do not see how, either in law or equity, these tribunals could have come to any other conclusion than that debts contracted by the absolute ruler of the State were debts due from the State, no matter how they had been contracted; as under the system of government existing in Egypt, there was no possible distinction between the personal and public liabilities of the Khedive. This, at any rate, was the view taken by the courts in question. Judgments were given in favour of the plaintiffs; and, in virtue of the clause of the Egyptian code, to which I have referred before, the Khedivial Government was requested to put these judgments into execution. No immediate action was taken on either side. Both the Khedive and the courts were anxious not to push matters to extremities, and the resources of the law—even more numerous and ingenious in Egypt than elsewhere—for the prolongation of legal proceedings, were called into play, in order to postpone any definite decision. Meanwhile, the bare fact that the State had been declared by the recognized legal tribunals of the country to be liable for the unfunded debts, tended to discredit the

validity of the Goschen-Joubert settlement in European opinion.

Again, public confidence abroad was impaired by the discovery that the figures upon which the Goschen-Joubert composition had been based were, in many cases, utterly unreliable. For instance, the gross annual receipts of the State railways were given as £900,000. As soon as the administration of the railways passed into the hands of an European board, it was discovered that though £900,000 were credited as receipts, the real sum received was only £600,000, and that the balance of £300,000 was solely a matter of account based upon charges made for special trains for the Khedive, his family, and his friends, and for trains employed in conveying troops or transporting government goods. Before the interest payable in respect of the public debt fell due in June, 1877, it was ascertained that the deficit between the estimated and the actual receipts of the revenues set apart for the service of the Unified and Privileged Debt, amounted to £820,000 for the former, and £200,000 for the latter. The discovery and the publication of these shortages was undoubtedly due to the vigilance and courage with which their ill-defined duties were discharged by the European, and especially by the English, officials whom Ismail had introduced into the public service. His intention had been that they should serve as figure heads. As they were nominated by him, and as their salaries were paid by him, he had some right—judging from his experience of the

foreigners, who, in former years, had been in his employment under similar conditions—to expect that they would content themselves with drawing their salaries, studying their own interests, and making no attempt to acquire information, whose possession might prove inconvenient. His Highness soon discovered that this impression was erroneous. I have no wish to represent the British officials who then, and later on, were employed in the Egyptian service as men exceptionally high-minded; but they were, as a body, imbued with a sentiment that, as honest men, they owed a duty to the people whose affairs they were called to administer, as well as to their own country and to themselves. I do not say that their non-English colleagues had not the same sense of duty, but I do say they did not display quite the same zeal for the interests of the Egyptian public. Anyhow, the mere fact that various departments of the public service in Egypt were in the hands of officials, who wanted to know the truth themselves and to let the truth be known abroad, added a new difficulty to the embarrassments with which Ismail had to contend.

If he had been labouring for a worthier cause, there would have been something heroic in the resolution shown by the Khedive, at this period of his fortunes, "to take arms against a sea of troubles." It was not only his creditors who harassed him day by day. In the Soudan, the Egyptian troops, under a Danish commander, Colonel Ahrendroop, had sustained a

disastrous defeat at the hands of the Abyssinians, by whom Prince Hassan had been taken prisoner. General Gordon, who had succeeded Sir Samuel Baker as Governor-General of the Soudan, had been instructed, with the view of conciliating public opinion in Europe, to discourage the slave trade, and had taken his instructions, to use a French phrase, "at the foot of the letter." Acting upon what he believed to be instructions given in good faith, Gordon had embarked on a crusade for the extermination of the Dervish slave-traders, an enterprise which Ismail had never contemplated, and indeed regarded as fatal to his scheme for the extension of his dominions to the Equatorial lakes. At home, the fate of the Mufettish, whether deserved or ill-deserved, had shaken the confidence of his native adherents in their Lord and Master's power to support them if they incurred the disapproval of the foreign officials for acts committed in his service and presumably by his instructions. Then, too, Ismail was constantly harassed by intimations from Constantinople that the state of affairs in Egypt was viewed with grave anxiety by the Porte, and that this anxiety might be attended with unpleasant consequences if some means were not employed for its removal. But, above all, he was kept on tenter-hooks by the knowledge that an agitation was gaining ground in Europe for the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to conduct an independent investigation into the causes of Egypt's indebtedness, and into the discrepancies between the estimates of the revenue—

furnished to Mr. Cave, and, later on, to Messrs. Goschen and Joubert—and the monies actually received by the Commissioners of the Public Debt. About this period, Ismail remarked to an Englishman, with whom he was on terms of great intimacy at the time, "For the last six months I have been so worried with business that I have hardly set foot within my harem." Yet, in spite of all these anxieties and fears, he still bore the same cheerful countenance; he still displayed the same charm of manner to all who came into his presence; he still bore himself as one secure in his position, trusting to his own strength of will, and confident of success.

During this period Nubar was in Europe, and in close relations with influential personages in the political and financial world, who, from various causes, took great interest in Egyptian affairs. It is obvious to any one, who, in common with myself, has constantly had the advantage of discussing Egyptian affairs with Nubar, and of perusing portions of his memoirs, that, about this period, his policy in regard to Egypt had undergone a grave change, or, to speak more accurately, had been gravely modified by the course of events. Up to the period of the Cave Mission he had been a staunch and almost fanatical partisan of Egyptian independence. He deprecated any form of direct European intervention. He was of opinion that personal government was necessary in Egypt, and he was confident that, by the establishment of the International courts, and by

the presence in Egypt of European officials in the service of the Khedive, who were of necessity representatives of European public opinion, the arbitrary character inseparable from personal government could be curtailed and restricted to a great extent, and that thereby Egypt could be given as good a system of administration as was suited to her stage of political development. I have always doubted myself, whether any half measure can be devised between material and moral intervention. All intervention in the end rests on force; and the only difference between material and moral force is, that under the former bayonets are placed in front, while under the latter they are placed in the rear. Still, I think Nubar's conception of a system of personal rule, preserved from grave abuse by the moral authority of European officials employed in the public service, and debarred from gross oppression by the existence of independent tribunals, to whose judgments the Government itself was bound to pay respect, was something more than an Utopian dream. The conception, however, was only conceivably realizable provided the Khedive could be induced to co-operate loyally in its execution. From the date, however, of the Cave Mission, Nubar came to the conclusion that the magnitude of the debts contracted by Egypt under Ismail's reign rendered intervention inevitable. He had too shrewd an insight into European politics not to perceive that the considerations which had saved Turkey from intervention did not apply to Egypt. This being so, he determined

to do his utmost to prevent intervention being exerted solely and simply in the interest of the bondholders. If intervention was to take place, Egypt's independence would necessarily be endangered, if not forfeited. He was therefore eager to so arrange intervention as to secure the well-being of the Egyptian people. The main cause of all the misery endured by the native population at this period was, in his opinion, the appropriation of private lands by the Khedive, purchased with the funds belonging of right to the State, and cultivated by forced labour. Before Nubar left Egypt, he had become convinced that nothing except compulsion would induce his Highness to surrender the lands he had appropriated; and that if the lands were not surrendered, intervention must follow as a logical necessity. Under these circumstances, he resolved to bring pressure to bear upon the Khedive, and thus to resort to the one expedient which, in his opinion, could possibly avert direct intervention.

He availed himself, therefore, of every opportunity to impress upon the personages he came into contact with, his firm conviction that the restoration of financial solvency in Egypt could never be carried into effect while the administration of the country remained in the hands of an absolute autocratic ruler; and that, in the common interest of Egypt and of her creditors, it was essential her financial administration should be placed under European control, supported by the authority of some one great European Power.

For the moment, Nubar's advice, in whatever quarters it may have been tendered, met with no immediate response. The year 1877 was that of the Russo-Turkish war, of the siege of Plevna, of the capture of the Shipka pass, of the final defeat of the Ottoman armies after an heroic, but unequal conflict. War was declared in the April of 1877, and in the last days of the following December the Sultan was suing for peace. The Governments of Europe were too deeply occupied with the Eastern Question, and with the ulterior complications which might arise in the event of its being solved by force of arms, to entertain the idea of any direct intervention in Egyptian affairs; and without the active support of their Governments, the creditors of Egypt had no power to bring about any drastic reform in Egyptian administration. Nubar thereupon bestirred himself in order to influence European public opinion in favour of active intervention. It was English opinion to which he attached the greatest value. He has often explained to me the grounds on which he held that England was better qualified than any other Power, or combination of Powers, to exercise a paramount authority in Egypt; and in this opinion he never varied, even when, at later periods, he had, or considered he had, cause to complain of the methods in which this authority was exercised. His views were that England, as the ruler of India, had, since the completion of the Suez Canal, a special interest in Egypt, vastly superior to that possessed by any Continental Power; that, however much

England might object to the idea of intervention, she objected still more strongly to any intervention to which she was not herself a party; and that, under the existing conditions of Europe, no intervention was possible unless England could be induced either to undertake it herself, or to take a leading part in its execution. Moreover, he was convinced that, in the interests of Egypt, the active intervention of England was attended with fewer disadvantages and with greater prospect of possible benefit than that of any other Power.

Nubar was habitually denounced in France as being an enemy to the French nation, and as having strong English proclivities. I am convinced the charge was unfounded. He had been brought up under French influences: he had studied in France; he was a thorough master of the French language, a great admirer of French literature, and was more in harmony with French ideas and French tone of thought than he was with those of England. He could read English perfectly, and could, if necessary, carry on a conversation in it; but he much preferred speaking French, even with his English friends, because, as he was in the habit of saying, his ideas expressed themselves more easily in French than in any other tongue except his own. Somehow he felt more at home in Paris, amidst French people, than he did in London, amongst English; and I should say his natural bias was towards France rather than towards England. On the other hand, his personal experience

had undoubtedly given him an unfavourable impression of French politicians and diplomatists. His sense of justice was outraged by the manner in which M. de Lesseps and his colleagues had exploited Egypt, and still more by the partisan support given to this exploitation by the French Government during the time when he was advocating the cause of Egypt before the arbiters appointed by Napoleon III. Again, when he was conducting the negotiations for the repeal of the Capitulations, and for the establishment of the International courts, he found himself thwarted at every step by French official influence, both in Egypt and abroad. From England, on the other hand, his efforts at reform had met with sympathetic support. Moreover, the French adventurers who crowded round Ismail in the days of his glory, were distasteful to Nubar, not only by conviction, but by instinct. He saw, and saw very keenly, the defects of English statesmanship, but he recognized that, on the whole, it was more honest, more trustworthy, and more high-minded, than that of France. Therefore, after he had made up his mind that Egypt, for her own welfare, must pass under European control, he laboured to the utmost of his power to place that control in the hands of England.

It was in connection with this period, when intervention was, so to speak, in the air, that I first came into intimate relations with Nubar. He had come over to London in order to place his views before the Government, and finding that these ideas met with

scanty response at the Foreign Office, he was desirous of bringing them before the public. He placed himself in communication with many publicists, and, amongst others, with myself. Nothing is further from my purpose than to exaggerate the very subordinate part I have played in Egyptian affairs. My functions, such as they are, have often seemed to me to resemble those of the chorus in the Greek tragedies, who are always engaged in commenting on the actions of others, but never take any action themselves. I am well aware that my functions could have been discharged as well, or perhaps better, by other English publicists with whom Nubar Pasha made acquaintance during his visit to London. All I need say is, that he chose me as his mouthpiece in the English press, and that he supplied me with information, of which I made the best use in my power in a series of articles published chiefly in the *Nineteenth Century*. These articles had necessarily only an ephemeral value. Their chief interest at the present day lies in the light they throw upon the views which Nubar held at this period of his career, and which ultimately were carried into effect, though not perhaps quite in the way he himself would have wished. Public opinion in England was not then ripe for the suggestion that England would do well to avail herself of the opportunity offered by the Russo-Turkish war for the assumption of a Protectorate over Egypt, but it was prepared to admit the necessity for intervention. In consequence, an article, which was published in the

Nineteenth Century, in December, 1877, on the debts of the Khedive, produced an effect utterly incommensurate with any little intrinsic merit it may have possessed. Previously to its publication, the general belief had been that the enormous mass of debt with which Egypt had been burdened under Ismail's reign, had been occasioned, as Mr. Cave had reported, by reckless waste and extravagance, by non-productive enterprises, by exorbitant payments to the agents who had negotiated his loans, and by unprofitable outlays of all kinds of expenses for which nothing could be shown. If this belief was correct, it followed that any attempt to discover how the debt had been incurred, however interesting as an historical study, could be of no great service to the creditors of Egypt.

In order to dispel this belief, Nubar was determined the truth should be made public. In accordance with information he gave me, I wrote the article above referred to, which furnished, for the first time, an intelligible answer to the question, what had become of the vast sums which Ismail had amassed, partly by foreign loans, partly by private borrowing, and partly by exorbitant taxation? The answer was to the effect that the main cause of the financial embarrassments of Egypt was the land greed, which had enabled the Khedive to become, within the space of little more than ten years, the owner of a million of acres, that is, of one-fifth of the cultivated soil of Egypt. Supposing this statement to be correct, it followed that Ismail had appropriated

to his own enrichment monies his creditors might in justice call upon him to replace.

Shortly after the publication of the above article, the Commissioners of the Public Debt proposed a Commission of Inquiry, and their proposal was supported by the bondholders, and especially by the French bondholders, whose interests were endangered by the financial crisis in Egypt. For reasons I have already indicated, France felt the necessity for the appointment of such a Commission more keenly than any other European Power. M. Waddington, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Republic, informed our own Government, early in 1878, that, in his opinion, the time had arrived for the appointment of an International Commission, empowered to investigate the financial position of Egypt, and the causes of her insolvency. This proposal was further strengthened by an intimation that if England and France were not prepared to act, Germany might step in for the protection of the German bondholders. From what quarter this intimation was given, I am not prepared to say. I can only say it was conveyed shortly after Nubar had paid a visit to Berlin, in the course of which he had discussed Egyptian affairs with Prince Bismarck. Finally, Lord Derby gave way, and agreed "to co-operate with the Government of France in any useful measure not inconsistent with the Khedive's independent administration of Egypt." On learning that England and France had come to an understanding,

the Khedive had to bow to necessity, and in March, 1878, he issued a decree, appointing a Commission. The decree, however, confined the functions of the Commission to a general investigation of the public receipts and expenditure of the State, and though it authorized the Commissioners to call on all the officials of the Government to furnish them with any information they might require, it studiously ignored the contingency of their desiring to obtain any information as to the assets and liabilities of the Khedive in his personal capacity. Finding that this decree did not satisfy the demand for a searching inquiry, the Khedive issued a second decree in June, 1878, declaring "that the researches of the Commission of Inquiry should extend to all the features of the financial situation, subject, however, to the legitimate rights of the Government." The Commission as finally appointed consisted of M. de Lesseps, president; of Mr. Rivers Wilson, together with Riaz Pasha, as vice-presidents; and of Messrs. Bavarelli, Baring, de Blignières, and Von Kremer.

The records of this Commission have very little general interest at the present day. For my purpose, they are only noteworthy as illustrating the extraordinary energy and astuteness with which Ismail fought against the inevitable. His first proposition was that the Commission should consist solely of M. de Lesseps and General Gordon. Two men less likely to bring to light facts which Ismail was anxious to keep in the background could hardly have been

selected. M. de. Lesseps, though he was doubtless desirous of promoting the interests of France, was strongly opposed to any interference with the supreme authority of the Khedive; while Gordon, who was a child in business matters, entertained an unreasoning prejudice against capitalists in general and the Egyptian bondholders in particular. Amidst his many eccentricities, he had formed an opinion of his own about the Khedive, which, to say the least, was at variance with that of the world at large. Indeed, about this period, he had in conversation expressed a hope that, when he lay on his death-bed, he might feel that throughout his life he had been as honest a man as the Khedive. With his usual imperfect understanding of European politics, Ismail doubtless imagined that—de Lesseps and Gordon being both popular favourites in their respective countries—any report they might agree upon could commend itself to public opinion both in France and England, while, with his usual keen understanding of how things can be worked in the East, he felt confident their report could be so manipulated as to serve his own ends. Gordon, however, with one of his rare flashes of common sense, declined the offer; and Ismail had no choice but to accept the Commission as constituted in the way I have described. The Commission sat from the 13th April, 1878, up to the 19th August. At the outset Ismail still retained the hope that it would confine itself to ascertaining the general indebtedness of Egypt and the expedients by which the deficit

might best be met without investigating the real causes of her financial embarrassments. In order to effect this object, he relied upon the active support of M. de Lesseps, the President of the Commission, and on Riaz Pasha, then Minister of Commerce, who was chosen by his Highness as the representative of the Egyptian Government. The reliance, however, was misplaced. Financial controversies were matters for which M. de Lesseps had no aptitude, and as soon as he had satisfied himself that the arrangements between Egypt and the Suez Canal Company were, by tacit consent, to be excluded from the scope of the inquiry, and that any attempt on his part to confine the subject matter under discussion to the general financial situation of Egypt must prove ineffective, he ceased to attend the meetings of the Commission, and took no further part in its deliberations. Riaz Pasha, who, later on, played a prominent part in Egyptian history, was a very honest man, a devout believer in Islam, and a person of considerable, though narrow, intelligence. His conception of his duty was that he was bound to carry out the instructions of his Sovereign, so long as these instructions were compatible with loyalty to his colleagues. In consequence, he did his utmost to resist any extension of the inquiry beyond the limits laid down by the Khedive, and thereby succeeded in protracting the discussions which preceded the publication of the report. More than this was beyond his power.

The Khedive soon discovered that his belief in

his own ability to stir up antagonism between the European members of the Commission was not justified by the event. He had taken it for granted that the European Governments, who had forced upon him the appointment of the Commission, only desired to protect the financial interests of their subjects, and did not concern themselves with the manner in which this protection might be obtained.

Possibly this anticipation might have proved correct if Lord Beaconsfield had not been Prime Minister at the time, and if the two Commissioners, Mr. (now Sir) Rivers Wilson and Major Baring had not been men of exceptional ability and resolution. Mr. Rivers Wilson, who, after a distinguished career in the Treasury, had been given the post of Controller of the National Debt, possessed not only a perfect knowledge of the French language, but an accomplishment still rarer amidst our fellow-countrymen, that of making himself a *persona grata* to foreigners. I may add here that the consent of her Majesty's Government to allow a high official in the British service to leave his post for a prolonged period in order to investigate the financial position of an independent state, was a virtual abandonment of the policy of non-intervention upheld up to this date by our Foreign Office. It is characteristic of our extreme reluctance to resort to active intervention that, in referring to this appointment in an official document, Lord Salisbury, who had just succeeded Lord Derby

as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, went out of his way to state that "he does not think it necessary to express any official opinion on Mr. Wilson's appointment."

Again, Major Baring, then a comparatively unknown man, had had considerable experience both as an officer in India—as one of the Commissioners employed in the delimitation of the Turkish frontiers after the Servian war—and as British member of the Public Debt Commission in Egypt. He possessed, moreover, by heredity, the financial ability for which the name of Baring had so long been an household word throughout the civilized world. He owed his appointment, if I am rightly informed, to the recommendation of the late Sir Lewis Mallet, who had formed a very high opinion of his ability in India. While the Commission was sitting, Nubar Pasha had interviews with M. Waddington in Paris and Lord Salisbury in London. They both, as he stated, advised him to use his influence to get the demand for the restitution of the Khedive's lands reduced to a comparatively small amount, as they were informed by their Consular agents in Egypt that nothing would ever induce the Khedive to surrender the whole of his estates, though he might be persuaded to disgorge a substantial amount. Nubar demurred to this advice, on the ground that though a partial restitution might benefit the bondholders, yet that Egypt could never recover from her embarrassments so long as the Khedive remained the

largest landowner in the country, with the power to compel the fellaheen to work on his estates for his own exclusive profit. Apparently this objection was recognized as valid, as from the commencement of the inquiry the British representatives took their stand upon the ground that the Khedive and the State were, in Egypt, synonymous terms; that it was impossible to distinguish between their respective responsibilities and liabilities; and that therefore no investigation into the financial position and prospects of Egypt could be of any practical value unless it extended to the affairs of Ismail Pasha in his capacity of a private landowner, as well as in his capacity as absolute ruler of the State.

The French representative, M. de Blignières, was disposed in the first instance to dispute this contention. Though nominated by the French Government, he had been practically selected by the *Grand Syndicat de Paris*, composed of directors of the *Credit Foncier*, the *Credit Lyonnais*, the *Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas*, and other French financial institutions holding large amounts of Egyptian securities. He argued with some plausibility that the duty of the Commission was to effect a satisfactory arrangement between Egypt and the bondholders, and that it was outside their functions to enter on the consideration of how, and by whom, and for what object the debts had been contracted in the past. M. de Blignières, however, was a very fair-minded man, open to conviction. When his British colleagues

had proved to him that all the embarrassments of Egypt were due in the past to the fact that the Khedive had treated the revenues of Egypt as his own, and that no arrangement they might make for the settlement of the State debts could possess any element of stability so long as his Highness retained the power of appropriating the revenues of the State to his own private use, he yielded to their representations, and finally became a partisan of their ideas. The Italian delegate, M. Bavarelli, was more desirous than any of his colleagues to avoid any drastic measures in respect of Ismail Pasha, and indeed his attitude, in common with that of most of the Italian officials in Egypt, gave some credit to the story current at that period that, in the days of his prosperity, Ismail Pasha had lent a very large sum of money to Victor Emmanuel on the security of the royal estates at Caserta. The Austrian delegate, Herr von Kremer, took up no very distinct line of his own, but, on the whole, sided with the majority.

I fancy the action of the Commission would not have been as decided and as unanimous as it proved to be in the end, if Ismail had not to some extent over-reached himself by his own astuteness. The word of order given to the officials of the Egyptian Government was to throw difficulties in the way of the Commission's obtaining the information necessary for the discharge of their duties. By article No. 3 of the decree appointing the Commission of Inquiry, "All ministers and functionaries of the Government

were ordered to furnish the Commissioners, without delay, with any information that they might demand." Cherif Pasha, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, and who, in virtue of his position, was regarded as Chief Minister of State, absolutely declined to submit himself to examination before the Commission, though he expressed his willingness to answer any questions which might be communicated to him by letter. This refusal created great irritation, as Cherif Pasha had the reputation of being the most favourably disposed towards Europeans of all the leading men in Egypt. His mother had been of French extraction. He had been educated in France, spoke French habitually, and greatly affected the society of foreigners of distinction who happened to visit Cairo. He had many intimate friends amongst the small British community of that period. He was a keen sportsman, a pleasant companion, a man of the world, and used to be described by his British associates as "a thorough gentleman." Nor do I think this description, so characteristic of our national habit of judging everybody and everything abroad by our own social standards, was altogether unjust. Nobody could help liking Cherif. But if you got at all below the surface, you could not fail to discover that he was a genuine Turk, with all the failings and virtues of a master race: a devout Mahometan in theory, though very lax in practice; an enemy at heart to all progress which interfered with his own interests, and imbued with all a Turk's

contempt alike for the native population of his adopted country and for the foreign Giaour. On receipt of Cherif's refusal to comply with the summons issued by the Commission, an appeal was made to the Khedive; and thereupon Cherif evaded compliance by resigning his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was succeeded by Riaz Pasha, who, being a member of the Commission, could hardly be called upon to appear before his colleagues, even if he had not declared, probably with justice, that he knew nothing whatever of what had occurred under his predecessor. Upon this, the President of the Daira Sanieh Administration—in other words, the manager of the Khedive's private estates—was requested to appear before the Commission. He, in his turn, pleaded that, being the servant of the Khedive, he could not give evidence without the direct authorization of his master. The authorization was applied for, and the Commission was informed that his Highness was too unwell for the moment to attend to business. Any number of similar difficulties were raised whenever the Commission approached the subject of the lands which the Khedive had appropriated to himself during his reign. His persistency in obstructing any investigation into his private estates confirmed the Commission in the conviction that it was to such an investigation their efforts ought in the first instance to be directed.

Once more the stars in their courses fought against Ismail, though it is by no means certain that

this deviation from their normal courses was not due to his own action. The receipts from the provinces, whose collection was still entirely in the hands of native officials, begun to fall off with suspicious uniformity just about the time when the Commission begun its labours. As soon as it became manifest that the Commissioners proposed to inquire into the causes which had led to the insolvency of Egypt before they entered on the consideration of the measures required for the restoration of her solvency, the Khedive announced that the funds were not forthcoming to meet the half-yearly interest of the Unified Debt, which was shortly falling due. His Highness proposed in effect to meet this sum by the sale of some portion of his private estates; but this proposal was declined by the Commission, on the ground that the true financial position of Egypt, its assets as well as its liabilities, must be thoroughly investigated and ascertained before any fresh liabilities could be contracted. The most probable explanation of Ismail's policy was that he imagined the influence of the foreign bondholders would be exercised to compel the Commission to reverse the course of their inquiry, and to postpone the consideration of the causes of Egypt's insolvency to the examination of the resources immediately available to meet the service of the Public Debt. Contrary to his expectations, the French Government declined to interfere with the course adopted by the Commission, and contented itself with declaring

that the interest then falling due must be paid, and that if the interest was not paid, further action would become necessary. The Khedive next appealed to the British Government, through our then Consul-General, Mr. Vivian, who had succeeded Colonel Stanton in 1877; but in spite of the opinion expressed by the British representative in favour of this appeal, the Foreign Office instructed him to impress upon the Khedive the urgent importance of making no default in the payment of the interest on the Unified Debt while the Commission was pursuing its inquiry, and thereby implicitly endorsed the action of France. When it was seen that England and France were prepared to act in harmony, the Khedive realized that further resistance was dangerous, and by some means or other money begun again to flow rapidly into the public treasury, and the May coupon was duly paid. How this payment was effected has never been clearly ascertained. Some months later Omar Pasha Lutfi, who had more or less succeeded to the position of the Mufettish, stated—in reply to a request from the Nubar-Wilson Ministry, as to what amount of money they might rely on receiving within a certain time—that the ministers had only to name the amount required for their purpose and the time within which it must be paid, and they might rely on their requirements being met, on the sole condition "that no questions must be asked as to how it had been procured." The offer was rejected, but the fact of its being made indicated clearly enough how

the funds may have been raised to meet the coupon of the Unified Debt.

Meanwhile, private negotiations had already commenced between the Khedive and Nubar with the view of the latter's returning to power, and he had at last consented to accept office again, in the hope that he might convince his Highness of the absolute necessity for the immediate and wholesale restitution of his private estates to the State, and that, by so doing, he might modify the stringency of the International intervention, which must manifestly be the result of the Commission of Inquiry.

Nubar arrived in Egypt in August, 1878, and was received most affectionately by the Khedive. On being asked his advice, he replied, according to his own statement, that the report of the Commission must be adopted, and that the private estates must be forthwith surrendered to the State. He found, however, that the attitude of the Khedive was unchanged. "Never," was the answer he received. His Highness suggested a variety of expedients to avoid the necessity. He proposed to place his estates in the hands of the Scheik el Islam at Constantinople, who would hold them in trust under the sacred law of the Koran. He next offered to give the Commissioners of the Public Debt the right to mortgage his estates to their full value, and to authorize them to employ the proceeds for the service of the debt; but he kept on repeating that nothing would induce him to part with his own property.

Meanwhile, the pressure of debt was augmenting rapidly. On the 10th of June the tribute payable to Turkey fell due, without there being funds in the Treasury to meet the payment. On the 15th of the same month the Grand Syndicate of Paris gave notice that they were going to summon a meeting of bondholders, in order to obtain their sanction for an application to the International courts to issue execution in respect of the payments in arrears due to the bondholders. It became clear that bankruptcy was imminent. In view of the demands for immediate settlement of individual claims, the tactics of the Khedive consisted in suggesting various expedients similar to those he had submitted to Nubar, by which a financial crisis might be postponed. The Commission, however, refused to consider any partial solutions, and insisted that the Debt of Egypt must be settled, if at all, by some composition, comprehending, in as far as possible, all classes of her creditors. At last, on the eve of their adjournment for the summer holidays, the Commissioners made a report, in which they laid down, as one of the necessary conditions of any satisfactory settlement of the financial position, that the Khedive should surrender to the State the lands, amounting in round numbers to a million acres, which he had appropriated during his reign, or had purchased out of the revenues of the State. When this report appeared, Ismail recognized that the game was up, and that, in order to save the ship, it was necessary to throw the cargo overboard.

It was obvious that if the Commission continued its investigations on these lines, they would ultimately recommend that Egypt should be placed under a system of International control, by which the administration would be taken out of his own hands and transferred to those of Controllers appointed by the European Powers. According to his own phrase, repeated to me about this time, *On veut me mettre en Syndicat.* He still shrunk from a final decision. When, however, he learnt that the members of the Commission of Inquiry had left one by one for Europe; that Mr. Rivers Wilson was leaving in a day or two, accompanied by Nubar Pasha; and that, in the event of his absolute refusal to carry out the recommendations of the Commission, immediate action would be taken on the arrival of the Commissioners in Europe, his resolution gave way, and he consented to sign the decree, handing over his private estates to the State.

The announcement of his Highness's intention to carry out the report of the Commission was made to Mr. Rivers Wilson, as the acting President of the Commission, and the only one of its members then remaining in Egypt, and was accompanied by a statement that the Khedive intended to establish Ministerial government in Egypt in lieu of personal government, in order to carry out the spirit as well as the letter of the report drawn up by the Commission of Inquiry.

THE ANGLO-FRENCH MINISTRY

Khedive establishes responsible government in Egypt—Appoints Nubar Pasha Premier, Mr. Rivers Wilson Minister of Finance, and M. de Blignières Minister of Public Works.

I THINK it can be shown, by internal evidence, that the idea of the Anglo-French Ministry came from Nubar Pasha, and that the suggestion of this idea to some extent reconciled Ismail to the surrender of his private estates. The conception of Ministerial responsibility, as understood in European constitutional communities, was too complicated a one for the Khedive to have originated, and still more to have approved. But he was far too astute not to realize the immediate advantages which it presented from his own personal point of view. Under a responsible Government, which comprised amidst its ministers Europeans of high character, approved of, if not selected by, their own Governments, the demand for foreign intervention must necessarily be postponed. The investigations of the Commission could hardly be continued till the new Europeanized system of administration had been given a fair trial. In other

words, the experiment, whether successful or otherwise, gained time, and to gain time is the main object of every insolvent from a crowned head to a petty tradesman. Whether this explanation is correct or not, it is certain that after his Highness had accepted the idea, he used every effort to create an impression that he was fully resolved to carry it into execution. On the 28th of August he wrote a letter to Nubar Pasha, which, I fancy, was previously revised by the person to whom it was addressed, offering him the Presidency of the responsible Ministry. This letter contains the following passage, which indicates clearly the view that the Khedive entertained, or, at all events, wished the public to believe he entertained, as to the attributes of the new system of government he proposed to establish.

"Instead of absolute personal rule, the principle on which the existing government of Egypt is based, I wish to have a personal rule which will direct the general course of public affairs, but which will be counterbalanced by a council of ministers. In one word, I wish henceforth to rule with and by my council of ministers. In order to carry out this idea, I consider that for the execution of the reforms I have already announced, the members of the Ministry must be jointly and severally responsible for one another. This point is essential. The council of ministers will discuss in common all important measures affecting the country. The opinion of the majority will determine the opinion of the minority. All ministerial decisions will therefore be taken by the vote of the majority of the Ministry, and by giving my approval I shall sanction in consequence the opinions which have carried the day (in my council). Each minister, therefore, will have to carry into

execution the decisions of the council which have received my approval, and which concern the special department entrusted to his care. . . . I consider that the appointment of a Ministry possessing these attributes is not incompatible with our customs and ideas, and is, on the contrary, in accordance with the precepts of the sacred law (of the Koran), and is consistent with an organized judicial system. The institution therefore (of ministerial responsibility) will be sufficient to meet the exigencies of our social system, and will permit us to realize our expressed intentions."

The purport of this letter, if not the letter itself, was communicated to the European Governments, and Mr. Rivers Wilson was informed of the Khedive's intention to offer him the post of Minister of Finance under Nubar Pasha as Premier. He therefore quitted Egypt with the object of obtaining, if possible, the consent of the British Government to his acceptance of the post.

On this news reaching Paris, the French Government insisted that their approval must be conditional on a French official being appointed to an important post in the Ministry, occupying an equal authority with that of his English colleague. This condition was not acceptable either to the Khedive or to Nubar. It so happened, however, that political and financial reasons combined to render its acceptance a matter of necessity. The British Government favoured the idea of a French official being included in the Nubar Ministry, on the ground that English intervention in Egyptian affairs was thus rendered less conspicuous. What was even more important, Mr. Rivers Wilson had

been authorized by the Egyptian Government to raise a loan of £8,000,000, on the security of the Domain lands, during his visit to Europe, and with this purpose he placed himself in relations with the great house of Rothschild. They agreed to issue a loan for this purpose, but insisted upon two conditions: first, that the Domain lands should be under the control of an International Commission; and secondly, that in order to satisfy the French Government, France should be directly represented in the Egyptian Ministry. If there is no good in arguing with the master of many legions, there is still less good in arguing with the masters of many millions; and both the Khedive and his Prime Minister had to give way. In consequence, M. de Blignières was appointed Minister of Public Works. There was no further necessity for the services of Messrs. Romaine and de Malaret, who had been appointed as financial supervisors with no executive functions, and they consequently resigned their posts.

It is not so easy to understand why Nubar Pasha should have associated himself with an experiment foredoomed to failure. Nobody had better reason to distrust Ismail's professions and promises. Nobody was more aware of how futile the idea of Ministerial responsibility must be in a country where the sole executive authority rested in the hands of an absolute ruler. He has more than once stated to me in conversation that on his becoming acquainted with Ismail's anxiety for his return to Egypt, in view of his taking

office in a constitutional Ministry containing foreign as well as native Ministers, he had an interview with our Foreign Office to inquire how far he could rely on British support in the event of the Khedive's arbitrarily dismissing his Ministry. He always declared that he was given to understand that in such a contingency he could count upon the active support of the British Government. I could never ascertain that any written assurance was given him to this effect, and I think it probable that he attached a greater value to general assurances of a friendly character than they intrinsically deserved. I cannot but think that he was anxious to interpret any assurances he may have received in Downing Street in the sense most favourable to his acceptance of the post he had been offered. After all, the position of a Ministry, one or more of whose chief members could not be got rid of without the consent of two great European Powers, was very different from that of any Ministry which Egypt had ever known before. If Nubar declined the offer, the Khedive would have had no difficulty in finding another native Premier, and if the experiment should by any chance prove successful, Nubar would, for the future, be left out in the cold. To any one who knows how all his interests, his hopes, and his ambitions centred in Egypt, it is not difficult to understand why, in opposition, perhaps, to his better judgment, he should have consented to become once more a Minister of Ismail Pasha. In view of subsequent

events, it is worth noting that before he started for Egypt, he made a journey to Kissingen, where he had an interview with Prince Bismarck. It is not my wish to represent Nubar Pasha as a statesman, actuated simply and solely by a desire to serve the interests of the country under his charge. As far as my experience goes, statesmen of this kind are black swans in every part of the world. As the event proved, he was honestly anxious to protect the native population of Egypt from oppression and misgovernment, but he was also anxious that this should be accomplished by his own agency, and after his own fashion. After all, he was an Oriental, bred and trained in a world where every man has to fight for his own hand. He may have felt assured that the Khedive would intrigue against himself and his colleagues as soon as they endeavoured to administer public affairs for the benefit of Egypt, not for the personal advantage of her Sovereign. But he believed, that if it came to a conflict, he could hold his own. In all judgments upon the personages who played their parts in the curious chapter of history, which has ended in the British occupation of Egypt, we must bear in mind that they, if not Orientals themselves, were dealing with Oriental affairs; and that their action must fairly be judged by the standards of the East, not of the West.

Moreover, I am convinced, that though he was by no means sanguine of success, he firmly believed that the personal rule of the Khedive, if controlled

by a responsible Ministry, supported indirectly by the Governments of Europe, would be most conducive to the true interests of Egypt. In a note, which he wrote at a date when Egypt had long passed under British occupation, I find the following words :—

"From the moment when the idea of judicial reform" (by the institution of the International courts) "had taken hold of my mind, I came to the conclusion that despotic rule, tempered and controlled by an organized system of justice, independent of the authority of the despot, was the form of government best adapted, for many long years to come, to the character of the great majority of Oriental races."

From this conviction, and from the collateral conclusion that European intervention should, if possible, be indirect, and not direct, he never wavered up to the end of his life.

When Nubar returned in Egypt, he was received with the utmost cordiality by his Highness. I am assured, by persons familiar with the Vice-regal Court, that the impatience of Ismail for the arrival of his Premier-elect resembled that of a young man waiting for the coming of his bride. Nothing could exceed the frankness with which the Khedive apparently accepted his new position as a constitutional Sovereign, who reigns, but does not rule. He was always fond of repeating catch phrases, and at this period his favourite catch-word, to any one who called upon him, was, "*Nous ne sommes plus en Afrique*,

nous sommes en Europe." Whenever any request of a public character was addressed to him, or whenever any reform was suggested, his invariable answer was, "You must speak to my Ministers. Henceforth, it is for them to govern, not for me." My own impression is, that during the interval which elapsed between Nubar's return and the completion of his Ministry by the arrival of his Anglo-French colleagues, neither the Khedive nor the Premier fully showed their hands. Both of them, from different motives, wished the other to make the first move.

Questions, however, were not slow in presenting themselves, which must have created doubts in both their minds as to how far they had the same objects in view. The British Government raised no serious objection to Mr. Rivers Wilson's appointment, and agreed that, under the altered conditions, there was no further need of Mr. Romaine's services as British supervisor of Egyptian finance. The French Government, however, while consenting to M. de Malaret's dismissal, insisted on his place being filled by the addition of a French official to the new Ministry. This demand was received with great disfavour by Nubar Pasha, as it was inconsistent with his wish to give his Ministry the character of an Egyptian, not an International, administration. He soon discovered, however, that the Khedive, while professedly sharing his views on the subject, was privately forwarding information to M. Waddington, as French Minister of Foreign Affairs, that, personally, he did not share

Nubar's views in respect of the appointment of a French Minister. Under these circumstances, further objection was futile. Nubar had to give way, and M. de Blignières was nominated Minister of Public Works. Again, though Ismail had formally undertaken to surrender his estates, he could not be induced to sign the act of retrocession. After various delays, he proposed the surrender should be subject to an undertaking that he should be entitled to a civil list of £500,000 a year. Nubar declined to support this demand, and it was only when it was discovered that the Rothschilds refused to proceed with the negotiations for the Domain Loan, unless the surrender of the Domain lands was made at once and unconditionally, that the Khedive signed the decree by which these lands were restored to the State.

In the latter days of November, 1879, Mr. Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières entered upon their duties at the Treasury and the Ministry of Public Works. Writing at the time when this Ministry was still alive, though *in extremis*, I described their functions in the following words:—

"In a confused sort of way, there is a general understanding that they are to administer the affairs of Egypt in accordance with European ideas of government. But towards whom this obligation was ever contracted, and by what agency its performance is to be enforced, are questions to which it is impossible to furnish an answer."

However, as all experience has shown, the most

anomalous institutions will sometimes work satisfactorily, provided good will and good faith are employed to facilitate their working. In the history of the United States, there is a period, previous to the outburst of the Anti-Slavery agitation, which is commonly designated "the era of good feeling." A similar term might be applied to the few weeks which followed the establishment of the Anglo-Franco-Egyptian Ministry.

At the outset nothing could be pleasanter than the reception his Highness accorded to his foreign Ministers. He possessed a singular talent for impressing upon all persons, whose support he desired to conciliate, a conviction that he attached especial value to their good opinion, and was prepared to follow their advice. I came out to Egypt just at this period in connection with some business affairs, in which I was then interested, and was only known, if at all, to Ismail Pasha, as the writer of an article which had contributed, in however small a degree, to the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry, and to the line of investigation they had adopted which had compelled him to surrender his estates. Yet his first act, on learning of my arrival, was to invite me to dinner, and to show me every civility in his power. He acted in the same way towards every personal friend of his new Ministers. His one desire, apparently, was to smooth away any difficulties which might arise in the working of the constitutional experiment. Not many weeks, however, had elapsed, after the new

administration had begun to get into working order, before the personal policy of the Khedive underwent a fundamental change, though his outward friendliness remained unchanged. As soon as the Khedive discovered that Nubar was able and willing to work in loyal co-operation with his foreign colleagues; that the English and French Ministers could not be set one against the other; and that the Ministry was determined to carry out the programme laid down by the Commission of Inquiry, he set to work to bring about the overthrow of the constitutional system which he himself had called into existence. Unlike Frankenstein, he met with little difficulty in destroying the monster of his own creation. Circumstances facilitated his endeavour. The conclusion of the Rothschild Domain Loan had been expected to meet all the urgent necessities of the Egyptian Treasury, and thus enable the Ministry to devote their attention to the investigation of the assets and liabilities of Egypt, with the view of proposing a permanent financial settlement between the State and its creditors. Thereupon sundry Alexandrian holders of unfunded debts obtained judgment in their favour at the International courts, and attempted, in virtue of these judgments, to attach properties already mortgaged as security for the Domains' Loan. In consequence, the Rothschilds declined to pay any further instalments of the loan till some arrangement had been concluded as to these alleged prior claims. The result was that the financial situation became even worse than it had been

before. The Government was harassed with endless claims, which it was utterly unable to meet. The revenues, from whatever cause, kept on falling far short of the original estimates; orders had to be issued to call in all taxes in arrear; salaries were left unpaid. General discontent ensued, and the natives were given to understand by the partisans of the old system of government that this state of things was due to the country being administered by foreigners, and that the condition of affairs would go on from bad to worse until the Effendina resumed his rightful position as supreme head of the State. It is easy to understand how readily insinuations of this kind found a hearing amidst an ignorant population, hostile by creed and race to the rule of foreigners and infidels.

Possibly the Ministry might have had a longer and fairer trial if it had been actively supported by the Consular body at Cairo. It was, however, only in accordance with human nature, and especially with human diplomatic nature, that the Consuls-General, who had been formerly the most important personages in Egypt, should resent any constitutional change which necessarily diminished their own authority, and should therefore have been reluctant to admit that the English and French Ministers had any claim to represent the Governments by which they had been selected. I need hardly say that this sort of jealousy manifested itself even more keenly amidst the female section of the Cairene-European community. The Khedive, who kept closely in touch

with the Consular body, came to the conclusion that, if he had to get rid of his European Ministers, he had no reason to apprehend any active intervention on the part of foreign Powers; and this conclusion removed any hesitation he may previously have entertained. I am convinced, however, that personal causes had little to do with the final result. As long as Ismail Pasha remained the absolute ruler of Egypt, no Ministry, however nominated, could hold office contrary to his will. When he once made up his mind to dismiss his constitutional Ministers, their fate was sealed.

The occasion was soon found. In order to reduce the expenses of the administration, a number of officers in the Egyptian army had been dismissed; and owing to the lack of available funds, the payment of the sums due to them on retirement had been temporarily postponed. On the 18th of February, 1879, a body of some 400 officers assembled in the courtyard of the Ministry of Finance, the former palace of the Mufettish, and demanded immediate payment of the arrears due to them. Nobody, who knows anything of Egypt at this period, can entertain a doubt that such a demonstration could not have been organized without the knowledge of the Khedive, and that its organizers, whoever they may have been, would never have ventured to commit an act of gross insubordination unless they had had reason to believe that their action was viewed with favour, to say the least, at the palace.

During the three preceding days, a large number of the dismissed officers had arrived in Cairo from the provinces, acting apparently under instructions. On his way to his office, Nubar was stopped by a crowd of officers. Mr. Rivers Wilson, who was passing, realized that the stoppage was not voluntary, and, leaving his own carriage, jumped into that of the President. They both left their carriage at the gates of the Ministry of Finance, and entered the courtyard together. There they were assailed with insults and cries of, "Death to the Christians!" They were hustled and pushed about, but, in as far as could be ascertained, no actual blows were struck. At last they contrived to make their way into the office, where they were comparatively in safety. The rioters, however, continued to block the exit, and seemed to be waiting for further orders. The Khedive was at Abdin, not five minutes' drive from the Ministry of Finance. Messages were constantly passing between the Ministry and the palace. But it was not till two hours after the demonstration that the Khedive appeared on the scene of action. On his Highness assuring the officers that their grievances would meet with his prompt attention, the mutineers retired at once as if by word of order. No punishment of any kind was inflicted, either then or later, on the ringleaders of the demonstration. The only action taken by Ismail was to make a communication on the same day to the Consular body that, in order to secure the preservation of the public peace,

he intended to assume the Presidency of the Ministry in the place of Nubar, whom he had dismissed from the post of Premier.

In as far as a constitution could be said at this period to exist in Egypt, the Khedive was acting within his constitutional rights. Nubar had accepted office, in common with all his native colleagues, at the hands of the Khedive; and the right of appointment involved the right of dismissal. But, as a matter of fact, this exercise of his authority, even if technically legal, violated the understanding on the strength of which the Governments of France and England had consented to officials in their own service becoming members of the Egyptian Ministry. Both M. de Blignières and Mr. Rivers Wilson stood most loyally by their late Premier. They caused strong representations to be transmitted to Paris and London, urging on their own Governments the fatal consequences certain to ensue from the arbitrary dismissal of Nubar Pasha, and from the high-handed act of the Khedive in assuming, of his own free will, the Presidency of the Council. I should doubt these representations having been warmly endorsed by the Consular authorities, through whom they were transmitted. Anyhow, they met with very little response, either at the Quai d'Orsay or in Downing Street. The French Government declined to insist upon Nubar's reinstatement, and the British Government, after its wont at this period, followed the lead of France. The only step actually taken was that the two Powers sent

men-of-war to Alexandria. For the moment Nubar Pasha was retained in the Ministry as Minister of Foreign Affairs. But his authority was at an end; and with his dismissal from the Premiership the so-called responsible Ministry had virtually ceased to exist. Some objection, however, was raised, both in London and Paris, to the idea of Ismail becoming his own Prime Minister; and as a concession to European public opinion, Prince Tewfik, the heir to the Khedivial throne, was appointed to the position of President of the Council. But before proceeding to record its formal downfall, I would like to say something of what this short-lived Ministry achieved, as well as of what it failed to achieve.

The responsible Ministry only enjoyed a little over three months of working existence. Yet, in this brief interval, notwithstanding the financial and political difficulties with which the Ministers were daily confronted, they contrived to lay down the lines on which the regeneration of Egypt has in the main been effected. Nubar Pasha had devised a scheme by which natives might be entitled to the privilege of having justice administered by the International, as well as by the Egyptian, courts. Mr. Rivers Wilson had set on foot a land survey, so as to preclude the assessment of the fellaheen by the arbitrary authority of Government officials. He had enforced the compulsory sale of lands belonging to wealthy Pashas, who had hitherto evaded the payment of their taxes; and he had actually dismissed several high-placed

officials, who had used their authority for their own advantage. M. de Blignières, during his short tenure of office, had no funds at his disposal for the discharge of his duties as Minister of Public Works. But, by his good sense and loyalty, he showed that, under more favourable conditions, he would have done much to develop the extraordinary natural resources of the Nile valley. It should also be recorded that whatever else the Anglo-French-Egyptian Ministry failed to accomplish, it established, for once and for all in Egypt, the principle of Ministerial solidarity. From this date the Ministers were no longer mere heads of departments, subject solely to the authority of the Khedive. They were henceforth members of a Ministry jointly responsible, in name, if not always in fact, for the policy of the Government. The result was that they acquired, however imperfectly, a collective authority independent of the Khedive, and hitherto unknown in the records of Egypt.

THE COUP D'ÉTAT

Reassembling of Commission of Inquiry—Ministry propose to postpone payment of various short loans—Ismail protests against proposal and dismisses his foreign Ministers—England and France decline to interfere.

I HAVE been told, I know not with what truth, that if a duck's neck is suddenly cut off, the headless bird will go wobbling on for a short distance without altering its pace. In a similar fashion the responsible Ministry survived for a few weeks its moral decapitation. Whatever might have happened, the experiment of an independent Ministry under an absolute ruler was sooner or later doomed to fail. But the failure was undoubtedly precipitated by the action of the Ministers themselves. When Ismail Pasha agreed to surrender his estates, he had some reason to expect that by this act, accompanied as it was by the appointment of a responsible Ministry, he had got rid of the Commission of Inquiry. The new Ministry, however, had hardly become installed in office, before the Khedive discovered his mistake. When the Commission held its last sitting in August, 1878, it was agreed that it should reassemble before the end

of the year, and enter on the second part of its labours, that is, on the investigation of the causes which, under Ismail's reign, had brought Egypt to the verge of bankruptcy. The Ministry would possibly have done more wisely if they had obtained the consent of the Powers, to whom the Commission owed its existence, to its adjournment for an indefinite period. This was the opinion of some of the Commissioners, and notably of Major Baring. The two leading members, however, Mr. Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières, were of a contrary opinion. They regarded the prosecution of the inquiry as essential to the success of their Ministerial policy. Believing, as they did, that they could, in case of need, rely on the active support of England and France, they aimed at curtailing the personal authority of the Khedive by introducing a number of reforms, required, as they held most justly, in the interests of Egypt, as well as of her creditors. These reforms, however, could only be carried, if at all, by enlisting public sympathy on their behalf, not only at home, but abroad. In order to excite the requisite sympathy, it was necessary to make public the extent to which the ruin of Egypt was due, not only to Ismail's extravagant expenditure, but to the way in which he had abused his authority as an absolute ruler. For this purpose, no better machinery could be devised than the existing Commission of Inquiry. It is very easy to be wise after the event, and it should also be borne in mind that Messrs. Wilson and de Blignières were placed in an exceptionally difficult

position, from the fact that they had accepted office, as Ministers of the Khedive, while they still remained members of the Commission of Inquiry, and therefore could not well take any steps for the suspension of its labours without the consent of their fellow-members. In consequence, the Commission reassembled on the 14th of December. Various meetings were held, at which much difference of opinion was expressed, but the final result was that the Commission determined to resume its labours, and the Khedive, at the request of his Ministers, issued a decree on the 6th of January, 1879, by which the Commission was granted authority to prepare draft laws for the regulation of all matters which had formed, or might form, the subject of their investigations. The readiness with which his Highness consented to issue the decree in question is probably explained by the fact, that he had already made up his mind to get rid of his responsible Ministers, and thereby cut short the career of the Commission of Inquiry.

With the dismissal of Nubar, the Ministry had lost its reason of being, and its few remaining weeks of office were occupied with futile endeavours to carry on the work of administration with an empty treasury. At last, as a temporary expedient, they proposed to postpone for one month the payment of a number of short loans then falling due. They obtained the sanction of the Commissioners of the Public Debt and the approval of the Commission of Inquiry, but they were met with

unexpected opposition from the Khedive, who only a few days before had been pressing urgently for the immediate payment of arrears due on the last instalment of his civil list. After the dismissal of Nubar, he had kept aloof from his Ministers, and had devoted himself to elaborating a plan of his own for the settlement of the Egyptian debt, with the assistance of a number of his native courtiers, who were members of the Chamber of Notables. On being asked to sign the decree postponing payment, he refused, with a great show of indignation, on the ground that there was absolutely no justification for such a measure ; that he would never expose Egypt to the shame of bankruptcy ; that he would himself undertake to restore solvency, but that the mode of settlement must be left entirely in his hands. He thus found the opportunity he desired for getting rid of his English and French Ministers. On the 7th of April, when they presented themselves at their offices, they found their places occupied by native Ministers, and in the course of the same day they received official notice that they were no longer in his Highness's service. Apart from the curtness of their dismissal, the European Ministers had no cause of complaint in respect of the never failing courtesy which they received from the Khedive and the Court during the remainder of their brief sojourn in Egypt.

Telegrams were despatched by the ex-Ministers to Paris and London, requesting instructions as to the attitude they should assume, in view of their dismissal

from office. I think I shall not be misrepresenting the instructions they received in reply as having been to the effect that their respective Governments recommended the adoption of an attitude of "masterly inaction." M. de Blignières and Mr. Rivers Wilson were dismissed from their respective offices on the 7th of April, 1879, and it was not till the 25th that England and France demanded their restoration. The demand was not accompanied by any distinct threat of action in the event of its not being complied with. The Khedive contented himself with replying that their reinstitution was an impossibility. This excuse elicited no protest in return on the part of the two Governments, and may, if silence gives consent, be said to have been accepted as valid.

Meanwhile, the Khedive, whose desire was to preserve the appearance of regularity in his relations towards the European Powers, proceeded to display his readiness to carry out the conditions under which the Anglo-French control was to revive of itself in case the responsible Ministry system should cease to exist. Major Baring and the Comte Bellaigue de Boghas, who had both served on the Commission of the Public Debt, were requested by Cherif Pasha, as Premier of the new native Ministry, to fill the posts which had previously been held by Mr. Romaine and M. de Malaret. Both these gentlemen, for private reasons, refused the offer, and the matter was allowed to drop for the time being. The Commission of Inquiry met for the last time on the 10th of April,

and agreed that in view of recent events, they had no course open except to tender their resignations. Thus, up to the latter days of April, the Khedive seemed to be carrying all before him. Nubar had been dismissed; the responsible Ministry had been sent to the right-about; the Commission of Inquiry had been compelled to terminate its existence; and no step towards active intervention had been taken either by England or by France. It is true the creditors, in respect of unfunded debts, were still giving trouble; but it seemed more than probable that if England and France had not been moved to action in Egypt by the summary dismissal of the Anglo-French Ministers, they would not resort to direct intervention in order to uphold the authority of the International tribunals. What, perhaps, had even more effect in restoring Ismail's confidence in his own success, was the receipt of private assurances from Constantinople that the Sultan was not disposed to support any request which might be addressed to him for the Viceroy's deposition. I have been told, by one who ought to know, that at this time his Highness received advice from one of the shrewdest of his French advisers, which, if it had been adopted, might have altered the course of events. The adviser in question was Barrot Pasha—a brother of M. Odillon Barrot—who had for many years filled the post of Foreign Secretary to the Khedive. Among all the Court circle at this period, there was a strong belief that Ismail had laid by a very large sum of money out of the

enormous amounts which had passed through his hands, and could, therefore, in case of need, provide funds out of his own pocket for any object he had at heart. On the strength of this belief, Barrot Pasha, who had, I think, a genuine regard for the Khedive, and who certainly had a strong interest in his maintenance on the throne, told the Khedive that, if he had the means, as common report stated, of advancing a sum of two or three millions sterling, he would do wisely to employ it privately by settling with all the creditors who had obtained judgment against him in the International courts. If this advice had been taken, the weapon by which Ismail's deposition was brought about would have been deprived of its efficiency. The advice was not taken, and retribution was at hand.

THE DEPOSITION OF ISMAIL PASHA

Germany intervenes to uphold the authority of the International courts —England, France, and Germany then call on the Sultan to depose the Khedive—Sultan issues orders for Ismail's deposition—Ismail's interview with Tewfik on resigning the throne—The ex-Khedive leaves Egypt—His life in exile.

THE promptitude and vigour of the action taken by the Khedive in getting rid of his responsible Ministry had found the Governments of England and France quite unprepared to take any decisive steps either singly or jointly. They were both extremely reluctant to employ force, and yet, if force were not employed, the Khedive must remain master of the situation. In London, as well as in Paris, it had been taken for granted that the Khedive would never dare to disregard the moral force of the two great Powers of Western Europe; but moral force, as usual, proved utterly ineffectual without material support. The Sultan, on being approached by the representatives of France and England at Constantinople, had given them to understand that, in his capacity of Suzerain, he was not prepared to intervene in Egyptian affairs. Weeks went on; no decision was arrived at; and

Ismail had more and more cause to hope that he had defied Europe with impunity.

The blow came from the quarter whence it was least expected. Germany had never previously displayed any great interest in Egyptian affairs. The number of German subjects holding Egyptian securities was at this period extremely limited; and the policy of the Empire under the rule of the Emperor William I. and of his great Chancellor had been throughout one of non-intervention in all foreign issues, which did not directly affect the safety or the interests of the Fatherland. Suddenly the world learnt with astonishment that Germany contemplated active intervention in Egypt. Certain German subjects, who were creditors of the Egyptian State, had obtained judgment in their favour before the International courts. These judgments had remained unexecuted, owing to the refusal of the Egyptian executive to carry them into execution. The courts had been established in virtue of an International agreement, to which Germany was a party; and she therefore claimed the right to demand the fulfilment of the agreement, on the strength of which she had agreed to the suspension of her Consular jurisdiction in civil matters. Germany thus came forward as the champion of the International tribunals, and announced that if their judgments in favour of German creditors of the State were not executed at once by the Khedive, she would have to take action to secure their enforcement. If a similar declaration had been made by either Lord Granville or M. Waddington, it would have

failed, in all likelihood, in terrifying the Khedive into submission. But, under Prince Bismarck, Germany had acquired the repute of never threatening unless she was prepared to strike.

I have never yet seen any adequate explanation of the motives which induced Prince Bismarck to go out of his way to take part in an issue with which neither Germany nor her people had any close concern. It may have been that, as the event proved, he was fully aware the threat of German intervention would compel France and England to take action themselves; he may have thought it well to break up the friendly relations which their common interests in Egyptian affairs had brought about of late between these two countries; he may have been glad of an opportunity to display the authority of Germany in International matters, while incurring an infinitesimal risk of having to vindicate that authority by action. I have often thought myself that the idea of German intervention may have been suggested intentionally or unintentionally to Prince Bismarck by Nubar Pasha; but, of any such suggestion having been made, I never could find any confirmation beyond its intrinsic probability.

The discovery that Germany was prepared to intervene created the utmost consternation in Paris; and both England and France agreed to join with Germany in demanding the deposition of the Khedive by the Sultan. Up to the last, however, Ismail trusted blindly to the assurances transmitted to him from Constantinople. Nor was this confidence unreasonable.

Nobody had better cause than he had to know that it was not the Sultan's interest, or that of the Porte, to deprive him of the power of gratifying their pecuniary exigencies. If gratitude has been rightly defined, as the expectation of future benefits, Ismail had every right to count upon the gratitude of his Suzerain. I have no doubt that the deposition of the Khedive was, both on political as well as on personal grounds, distasteful to the Turkish authorities. Still, with the Ottoman, as with all moribund Governments, the instinct of self-preservation is the dominant principle. In the face of the united demand of the three great European Powers, led by Germany, for the deposition of the Khedive, the Sultan recognized that, with or without his consent, the position of the Viceroy was untenable, and that if he was to be deposed at all, it was more in consonance with Turkish interests and Turkish dignity that he should be deposed in conformity with, not in opposition to, the will of his Suzerain.

At an early hour in the morning of the 25th of June, 1879, despatches were received by the English and French Consuls-general, announcing that the Ottoman Government had recognized the necessity of removing the Viceroy from the throne. These despatches were immediately communicated to his Highness by the Consuls, accompanied by Cherif Pasha, who urged upon the Viceroy the expediency of abdicating in favour of his son, in order to avoid deposition. Ismail, however, absolutely declined to surrender his throne, except on

receiving formal orders from the Porte; and against this contingency he regarded himself as secure. Before, however, the day was over, a telegram was received from Constantinople, addressed to "Ismail Pasha, late Khedive of Egypt," and informing him that he had been deposed by the Sultan, and that his son and heir, Tewfik Pasha, had been nominated in his stead.

I have often wondered what would have happened if Ismail had put his back to the wall and declined to yield. He was certainly not wanting in courage, and nobody understood more fully than he did the difficulties in the way of any direct foreign intervention. But the possibility of his forcible deposition by the Sultan had never entered into his calculations. He was far too well versed in Oriental politics not to appreciate the opportunity offered to the Porte by the unexpected turn of affairs, which had induced the great European Powers to avail themselves of the services of Turkey, in order to bring about his removal from the throne. The independence of Egypt was due to the support of these Powers, and if he persisted in resisting the orders of the Sultan, backed as they would be by the authority of England, France, and Germany, the inevitable result would have been the despatch of a Turkish force to Egypt to enforce his deposition. He knew that if the Turks once got possession of the Pashalik, the independence which his grandfather Mahomet Ali had won for himself and his dynasty would soon be in the gravest peril of forfeiture. It is not an undue stretch of charity to credit

Ismail, apart from his personal interests, with an honest desire to uphold the separation from Turkish rule, which formed the great triumph of his dynasty. He knew also too much of Turkish statecraft not to be aware of the fate that awaited him if he came off the worst in an armed conflict with Turkey on Egyptian soil; and he had no illusions as to the certainty of his defeat in the event of such a conflict. There was not then—I doubt if there is now—any sentiment of Egyptian nationality to which the ruler of Egypt could have appealed as against Turkey. In the East, nationality is a matter of creed, not of race. It was absolutely certain that the Egyptian population would have offered no resistance to the deposition of the Khedive by the armies of the chief of Islam. It was therefore simple madness to defy the authority of the Sultan, acting, as he did, as the delegate of the great Christian Powers.

Ismail Pasha had the good sense to see that he had played the game, and lost. He accepted his defeat with a dignity not unworthy of the position he had held so long. He despatched a messenger to Tewfik, who was residing at Koubeh, a village about five miles to the east of Cairo, summoning him to the palace of Abdin. On his son's arrival, Ismail saluted him after the Turkish ceremonial of an inferior when addressing his superior, raising his hand gradually from the hem of his garments to his forehead, and then conducted him to the divan, on which he himself used to sit as Khedive, and remained

standing in his presence. The son was nervous, pale, agitated; the father was perfectly self-possessed, calm, and impassive. Of what may have passed between them privately there is no record. But I should doubt there having been any confidential communication. In as far as I can learn, Ismail, after recognizing his son as the reigning Khedive, announced that he should leave for Alexandria on the following day, and should thence sail for Europe; and then retired to the harem. His departure, however, was delayed, on one pretext or another, for some days longer. He needed, or represented that he needed, a large sum of gold for the expenses of his journey—a demand which did not seem unreasonable in itself, as he originally proposed to take with him all his personal attendants, and three hundred ladies of the Vice-regal harem. He tried to get the consent of the Sultan to his taking up his abode at Smyrna; but his request did not meet with any support from his successor, on the grounds, though probably not the avowed grounds, that Smyrna was too near to Egypt, and that if the ex-Khedive was living in Turkish territory, his facilities for intriguing would be greater than if he were residing as an exile in Europe. The money difficulty was arranged somehow or other, and within a week from his deposition the Khedive left Egypt for Naples on board the Khedivial steam-yacht, the *Mahroussa*, which he had had built for him in England previous to the opening of the Suez Canal. He departed from Alexandria with all the military honours due to his

position. Salutes were fired from the batteries he had erected and from the men-of-war lying in the harbour he had created. Of any popular manifestation in his favour, there was little or none. His reign had not been calculated to enlist the sympathies of his people; but even if this had been otherwise, he would have been allowed to quit his kingdom in silence. In Egypt, even more than elsewhere in the East, the Arab proverb holds good, that "a wise man will always dance before the monkey, but only so long as the monkey rides on horseback."

From the time the low sand-dunes which surround Alexandria had faded from his sight, Ismail never set eyes again upon the country which, after a fashion of his own, he loved so well. As I shall have occasion to relate hereafter, he exercised indirectly a considerable influence on the course of Egyptian politics. But his direct connection with the country ceased entirely with his departure. It may therefore be as well to say here what little I have to say of the fifteen weary years he passed in exile.

It has been my fortune in life to have seen a good deal of many exiled kings, princes, potentates, and statesmen. However they might differ in other respects, they all shared one hope and one delusion. The hope was to return to the country where they had ruled in the days of their glory; the delusion was an unshakable belief, that their country was longing for their return. Ismail, though a shrewd man of the world, with a very low estimate of human nature, cherished

this hope and this delusion with a conviction impervious to the evidence of facts. He had no intellectual pursuits; he was not a keen sportsman; he took no interest in foreign countries or their politics, except in as far as they affected, or might affect, the fortunes of Egypt in connection with his own. Gambling for lower stakes than a throne was not a habit for which he entertained the passion of so many Orientals. Even sensual pleasures attracted him, mainly as a means of passing the time, rather than as pursuits delectable in themselves. His one real life interest during his exile lay in the possibilities of his return to Egypt. The schemes evolved in that subtle brain were of the most fantastic character. At one time he looked to Italy, to France, to Germany, and even to England, to bring about, if not his reinstatement in power, his return to Egypt. At another period he counted on the Sultan, on Arabi, or the Mahdi, to assist him in the attainment of his ambition. This almost insane craving was known to everybody who came near him, and the knowledge was used unscrupulously by many of his hangers-on. His purse was always open to any suggestion that, by the expenditure of money, he could command services which might tell in favour of his restoration. The more circuitous, the more underhand, the more connected with intrigue these services might be, the more they appealed to his Oriental imagination. A cynical Frenchman, who had been formerly on intimate relations with Ismail in the days of his power, once

made to me the following comments on his late employer's character:—

"It is impossible to understand the working of Ismail's mind. If I told him that by paying a thousand pounds to a French Minister, who was notoriously in want of money, he could secure the Minister's influence with the Government, he would never believe the truth of my statement. But if I told him that the confidential secretary of the Minister had an intrigue with his employer's wife, and was at the same time in love with a ballet-girl, and that by bribing the girl's mother he could indirectly secure the services of the Minister, he would give me any sum I asked without further questions." From this point of view, it is easy to understand how, in his exile, Ismail fell a prey to every adventurer who could suggest any roundabout channel by which personal influence might be brought to bear in furtherance of his heart's desire.

He resided at the Favorita palace near Portici for some years, but quitted Naples because one of his wives escaped from the palace in company, it was reported, with an Italian barber, and because the Prefect of the city declined to compel her to return to the harem. After that he remained for a period without any settled residence, but lived chiefly in hotels in London, Paris, Vienna, and the Continental watering-places. He was very fond of seeing anybody whom he had known in Egypt, and for his old English acquaintances and friends in Cairo he

had, or professed to have, a special regard. Whatever his faults may have been, he bore himself with dignity. In the many private conversations I had with him during the period of his wanderings, I never heard one word of complaint from his lips as to his deposition. He always spoke in high terms of the statesmen, diplomatists, and officials, both native and foreign, who had been associated with his reign, and never said a word of disparagement of the men who had contributed, directly or indirectly, towards his downfall. He never forgot in public, or allowed others to forget, that he had been a Sovereign; but he had nothing of that touchy sensitiveness so common amongst men who have held exalted positions which they hold no longer. I remember being present at a dinner in London, given by an English gentleman who had enjoyed Ismail's hospitality in former days, and who had invited a party of old visitors to Cairo to meet Ismail. It was understood on all sides that the ex-Khedive was the guest of the evening. By some oversight —I fancy by a mistake of date—the Ambassador of a great Continental State appeared somewhat unexpectedly amongst the guests just before we went down to dinner. According to arrangement, Ismail Pasha was to have taken the hostess in to dinner; but with the appearance of an unforeseen guest, a question of precedence arose. His Highness, seeing there was a difficulty, immediately went up to the lady of the house, saying, "I must insist upon

your going down with the Ambassador. He is the representative of a reigning Sovereign. I represent nobody but myself." The anecdote may appear trivial, but it illustrates the charm of manner which caused so many of us, who held the strongest opinion as to Ismail's public record, to have a sort of personal regard for him, which, logically, we might have found it hard to justify. His failings, his faults, his sins, were grave enough in all conscience; but still it was impossible—I, for one, at any rate, found it so—to ignore his imperturbable good humour, his manifest desire to make himself pleasant to all who came within his circle. He liked people to like him, and this, after all, is something to say for a ruler who, for his own misfortune and that of his people, had been for years an absolute master, whose will was law.

The end of his life ought, if there is such a thing as abstract justice, to expiate some of his offences. In 1887 he was invited by the Sultan to take up his abode at Constantinople. All his friends advised him most strongly to decline the invitation. But his mind was made up. The alleged cause of his acceptance was the difficulty of residing in any Christian State together with his harem. The real cause consisted, I am convinced, in the hopes held out to him by the Ottoman Government, that if he placed himself under their protection, they would use their efforts to secure his return to Egypt. From the moment, however, that he set foot on Turkish soil, he found himself, in

fact, if not in name, a prisoner of State. He was pestered with constant applications for money from the Sultan and his Ministers; he was debarred from communicating freely with his friends; he was kept under perpetual surveillance. Suffering as he was from a serious liver complaint, he was refused permission to go to Carlsbad, his visits to which on previous occasions had restored him to comparative health, and was advised to try the waters of Broussa. He was powerless to escape, and knew that any suspicion of his being anxious to get away would lead to increased isolation from the outer world. For eight years he lived on, racked with pain, cut off from society, and haunted by the dread of the fate that might befall him, if for any reason, or indeed for no reason at all, he incurred the displeasure of the Commander of the Faithful.

It is a pleasure to me to record one incident connected with his death, which shows that, whatever his public record may have been, he had endeared himself to the members of his own domestic household. By his will he left his three surviving wives his executors. The winding-up of the estate proved to be a very complicated matter. The widows were strongly advised by their lawyers not to act as executors, as by so doing, they, in accordance with Turkish law, would become personally responsible for all the debts of their husband's estate, which might probably have to be made good out of their private estates. But, with one accord, they refused to act upon this advice,

saying, "It was the master's will that we should be his executors, and we must obey the master's orders." It is something, when you are dead and gone, to retain the respect and affection of one wife; how much more of three wives!

EGYPT UNDER LIQUIDATION

Accession of Tewfik—Nomination of Dual Control—Financial difficulties—Appointment of Commission of Liquidation—Summary of their report—The estate of Ismail Pasha Sadyk.

AFTER Ismail had sailed for Europe, Tewfik received his formal investiture by the Sultan as Khedive of Egypt. Probably few princes have ever ascended a throne beset with so many difficulties and provided with so scanty a training in the art of government. According to the gossip of the bazaars, his mother had occupied a menial position in the Vice-regal harem, had caught the fancy of Ismail Pasha, and had given birth to Tewfik. The attachment of Ismail was of short duration; and other ladies of the harem soon supplanted Tewfik's mother in the favour of her lord and master. Her child, however, being the firstborn son of Ismail, was entitled to succeed to the Vice-regal throne; but during his father's lifetime his position as heir-apparent was to him rather a disadvantage than otherwise. All his half-brothers were sent abroad to be educated, to learn foreign languages, and to become familiar with other races, other creeds, and other civilizations than their own.

They were, for the most part, quick, intelligent lads, who profited by their foreign training. Tewfik, on the other hand, had none of these advantages. He was not allowed to travel abroad; he was brought up mainly by Mahometan instructors, and was little known to the frequenters of the Vice-regal Court in the days of Ismail's pomp and glory. Moreover, even if his tastes had not led him to prefer a retired life, spent in the cultivation of his estates, his father's love of absolute power was incompatible with his heir's playing any prominent part in public affairs. Towards his other children, Ismail was an affectionate parent; towards Tewfik, he was the reverse. Tewfik was the only personage in Egypt of whom I ever heard Ismail speak disparagingly during his exile. Indeed, between the two men, so different in character, there could not well have been any genuine sympathy. But for the accident that Tewfik was the heir to the throne, he would have passed his life in obscurity. Happily, his reluctance to put himself forward had inspired his father with confidence in his never being likely to take part in any of those palace conspiracies, which are such common incidents in the annals of Oriental Courts. I should doubt this confidence having been reciprocated. The first time I ever met Tewfik was at a ball given by Ismail Pasha at the Gesireh palace, shortly after the establishment of the Responsible Ministry. I was known then in Egypt, in as far as I was known at all, as being an intimate friend and associate of

the English Minister of Finance, Mr. Rivers Wilson, and of Nubar. An English official in the Egyptian service, long since dead, who had a perfect mania for introducing people to one another, told me that Prince Tewfik was anxious to make my acquaintance. I was presented to the Prince, who then, as always, received me with great amiability, and had begun to answer some commonplace remark I had made, when he became aware that his father's eyes were watching us from beneath his shaggy eyebrows. Tewfik suddenly stopped in his reply, and turned away without saying another word. I asked my introducer if I had said anything to give offence. "Oh no," he replied; "he only left you because he saw his father had noticed your being in conversation with him." The plain truth was, that Tewfik was cowed by his father as long as the latter reigned, and that up to the very end of his life he never quite shook off the terror which his father had inspired. A man of twenty-seven, spare of figure, with a plain but not unkindly face, gifted with good intentions, but with narrow views; a devout believer in Islam; a Turk of the Turks, imbued with all the prejudices of his race and caste against the Giaour and against Christian civilization; a good husband; a man, according to Oriental ideas, of moral domestic life; a frugal administrator;—such was the Prince, who, by the irony of fate, became the successor of Ismail the Magnificent.

The Treasury was empty at the date of Tewfik's

accession; the creditors of Egypt were clamorous for the payment of their debts; the bondholders pressed for the reorganization of the finances; the holders of judgments given by the International courts insisted on their immediate execution; and the Governments of France and England demanded the appointment of two Controllers with extended powers of control. It was stipulated by the two above-named Powers that the Controllers should be authorized to exercise functions analogous to those of the Anglo-French Ministers in the Responsible Ministry; that they should have the right to be present at the meetings of the Cabinet; that they should be nominated directly by their own Governments, without whose consent they could not be dismissed from their posts; and that the only direct relation Egypt was to have with them was to consist in the privilege of paying their salaries. The anticipation of Ismail had, in fact, been fulfilled; and Egypt was now placed under a Syndicate. I have no doubt that Tewfik bitterly resented the establishment of the Dual Control; but, where Ismail had failed, Tewfik could not hope to succeed, and he had to bow to the inevitable. The first act almost of Tewfik, after his accession to the throne, had been to send a telegram to Nubar in Paris, forbidding him to return to Egypt till further orders. It is possible the new Khedive suspected Nubar of having brought about his predecessor's downfall, and therefore may have considered his presence in Egypt dangerous to his own security. It is probable that—

holding as he did, though in a less extravagant form, his father's conviction that the Khedive was by right the absolute ruler of Egypt—he may have feared Nubar's avowed policy of extending the jurisdiction of the International courts to natives. It is certain, also, that he had a personal prejudice against Nubar as being at once a Christian and a reformer. Anyhow, he determined to dispense with the services of the one statesman who might have been able to modify the authority of the Dual Control, which, in the interval between the deposition of the Khedive and the British occupation, directed the administration of Egypt. The French Government selected as their Controller M. de Blignières, who had held the Ministry of Public Works in the Anglo-French Ministry. It was universally expected in Cairo that his late colleague, Mr. Rivers Wilson, would also be selected as the representative of Great Britain. This expectation, however, was not fulfilled; and Major Baring was appointed in his stead. The appointment was an excellent one in itself, but it had not the same effect in restoring English prestige in Egypt as would have resulted from the reinstatement of the English Minister of Finance.

The next step taken in the interest of the financial reorganization of Egypt was the appointment of the Commission of Liquidation, whose duty it was to continue the investigation commenced by the Commission of Inquiry. The Commission of Liquidation

was composed of much the same personages as the Commission of Inquiry, the only important alterations being that Sir C. Rivers Wilson, who had been made a K.C.M.G. on his return from Egypt, replaced M. de Lesseps as the nominal, as well as the acting President; that Major Baring and M. de Blignières became, as the two Controllers, *ex-officio* members of the Commission; while the vacancies thus caused were filled up by the appointment of Mr. Auckland Colvin and Comte Bellaigue de Boghas as Commissioners of the Public Debt. It is obvious that the deposition of Ismail had materially modified the scope of the Commission's investigation. The real aim and object of the efforts made so persistently by its predecessor, and resisted so obstinately by Ismail, was not to elucidate bygone history, but to make public a mass of information, which would not only compel the then Khedive to surrender the vast properties he had procured for himself at the cost of the State, but would debar him from ever again appropriating public funds for like purposes. With Ismail in exile, with Tewfik on the throne, with an administration virtually directed by the Anglo-French Controllers, and with the estates of the ex-Khedive and his family restored to the public Domain, it had become far more urgent to effect some compromise between Egypt and her creditors than to rake up the misdoings by which Egypt, under Ismail, had been brought to the verge of ruin. The change of name given to the new Commission represented the change

in its functions. It was a Commission, not to inquire into the bankrupt's career previous to his bankruptcy, but to liquidate his estate. The Commission commenced their sittings on the 10th of April, 1881.

The Khedive, in theory, appointed the Commission of Liquidation of his own free will. In fact, he had absolutely no choice in the matter, as Messrs. Rothschild would only consent to pay over the amount raised by the Domain Loan, on condition that this amount was to be distributed by the Commissioners of the Public Debt, in such manner as the Commission of Liquidation might direct in their report. The members of the Commission were nominated by a Khedivial decree, but they were in reality selected by the Governments of England, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy. Again, while these Governments repudiated officially all responsibility for the proceedings of the Commission, they engaged beforehand to accept any composition between Egypt and her creditors based on the report of the Commission, and to recommend its acceptance to the other Powers, which had taken part in the establishment of the International tribunals. I could never ascertain the exact legal process by which the "Law of Liquidation" was accepted as binding by these tribunals, even when it was inconsistent with the code under which they exercised their jurisdiction. If it was worth anybody's while to do so, it might be possible to find grounds for the contention that the action of the Commission was, from a

strictly legal point of view, *ultra vires*. But in this case, as in so many others, the proverb holds good, *summum jus summa injuria*, and the whole status of International law is of so nebulous a character that it is well-nigh impossible to say what is or is not permissible under International jurisdiction.

The *procès verbaux* of the sittings of the Commission are not lively reading, and I have no intention of inflicting them upon my readers. What struck me most in their perusal, was the good sense displayed by the Commission, and the good temper with which their discussions were conducted. Their task, doubtless, was facilitated by the fact that Egypt and her creditors had a common interest in coming to a reasonable compromise, while all the world was alive to the truth that if the creditors stood out for more than they could reasonably claim, they ran a great risk of getting nothing at all. Judging by the reports, the Commissioners could devote but very cursory attention to the complicated and well-nigh unintelligible statements of accounts submitted to their inspection. They dismissed doubtful claims; they cut down genuine claims; they exhibited a sovereign contempt for the sanctity of contracts. But they succeeded, after three months of arduous labour, in formulating a settlement between Egypt, the bondholders and the floating-debt creditors, which gave general satisfaction at the time, and which, during the score of years that have come and gone since, has never been seriously criticized, or, still less, disputed.

The report was embodied in a decree, the main conditions of which may be worth quoting.

The revenues of the State railways, the telegraph service, and the port of Alexandria, were set apart to the service of the Preferred Debt, while in the event of these revenues falling short of the amount required to pay the interest of 5 per cent., the deficit became a first charge on the receipts hypothecated to the Unified Debt. These receipts consisted of the custom dues, the taxes on imported tobacco, and the revenues of the four fertile provinces, Garbieh, Menoufieh, Behera, and Siout. The interest payable on the Unified Debt was reduced to 4 per cent. The short loans of 1864, 1865, and 1867 were converted into stock of the Unified Loan, the holders of these loans receiving in exchange for 80 per cent. of their nominal value 60 per cent. of Unified bonds. The Commission of the Public Debt was authorized to receive and collect the receipts affected to the service of the State loans, and to distribute them in accordance with the Law of Liquidation. Their consent was declared essential to the issue of any new loan, and they were specifically empowered, as the legal representatives of the bondholders, to institute actions against the Government before the International tribunals. The Daira Sanieh lands, the most valuable of the lands ceded by Ismail, were placed under the control of an Anglo-French Commission, and the holders of the loan raised on these lands during the preceding reign were

declared entitled to 4 per cent. interest under the guarantee of the Egyptian Government, with an additional 1 per cent. in any year during which the revenues derived from these lands sufficed of themselves for the full payment of the interest due on the Daira Sanieh Loan. The Daira Khassa Loan was amalgamated with the Daira Sanieh Loan upon similar terms.

The floating debt was to be cleared off partly in cash, partly in Unified bonds. After the amounts of these debts had been established to the satisfaction of the Commission, the creditors were to receive 30 per cent. in cash and 70 per cent. in bonds of the Privileged Debt, taken at their par value. Their market value was at this period considerably below their nominal value. The arrears of the tribute due to Turkey, which had been hypothecated by the Turkish Government to the service of the Turkish Defence Loan guaranteed by England and France, were to be paid in cash; as also were the amounts overdue for pensions, official salaries, and the civil list of the Khedivial family. The Moukabala Loan was to be cancelled. The holders of Moukaba bonds—who, with few exceptions, were native landowners—were to receive a sum of £150,000 annually for fifty years, an amount which it was calculated would give them about 1½ per cent. interest on the sums they had paid the Egyptian Government in order to free their estates from the land-tax to all perpetuity. The Domain Loan was

left absolutely intact, while the revenues of the rich province of Keneh were appropriated to its service, in addition to those of the Domain lands, on which the loan had been originally issued.

Under the circumstances of the case, I fail to see how any better arrangement could have been devised which was fairly just towards the bondholders, and yet, as the result has proved, did not place an unbearable burden on the shoulders of the Egyptian tax-payer. The credit of this composition belongs chiefly to the President of the Commission, Sir C. Rivers Wilson, and may fairly be cited as evidence of his remarkable financial ability. From a political point of view, the results were not equally satisfactory. The Law of Liquidation, under which Egypt is administered to the present day, established the most anomalous and the most cumbrous system of government ever imposed upon a nominally independent country. The general supervision of the administration was placed in the hands of two Controllers, appointed by the Governments of England and France. The major portion of the public revenue was made subject to the absolute authority of the Commissioners of the Public Debt, who were entitled to regulate the disposal of any surplus which remained after the service of the debt had been amply provided for. These Commissioners were appointed by England, France, Germany, Austria and Italy, and were altogether independent of the Egyptian Government. The State

railways, the Domain lands, the Daira estates, and to a lesser extent the five provinces, whose revenues were pledged to the service of the Public Debt, were, and are, administered by boards composed of English and French nominees, who owe no duty to the Government of the country beyond that of seeing that the interest of the debt is duly forthcoming. In one important respect, this system of International administration has been modified, as I shall soon have to relate. But even under the British occupation, which has now lasted for twenty years, Egypt is still governed in the most important departments of her administration by a number of International Boards, whose jurisdiction is ratified by the Law of Liquidation, the financial Magna Charta of Egypt. For this state of things, the Commission is not to blame. Their functions were confined to establishing a *modus vivendi* between Egypt and her creditors, and they had not the power, even if they had the wish, to relieve Egypt from the obvious evils of government by Syndicate.

It is utterly impossible in a narrative of this kind to deal with the various questions upon which the Commission had to adjudicate. Some notion, however, of the complexity of these questions may be gathered by reading the issues presented to their consideration in one single case, which I have selected mainly because it is connected with the story of Ismail Pasha Sadyk. At the time of his death, whenever and wherever it may have occurred, the Mufettish left a

fortune valued at over £500,000; and as his children were still minors, he appointed as his executor a certain Hafez Pasha. The interests of the children were placed under the protection of the Mekemeh, the Mahometan tribunal, which, in accordance with the sacred law of Islam, adjudicates in all civil matters affecting the followers of the Prophet. The decree exiling the Mufettish to the Soudan did not ordain the confiscation of his property. It was only after his death that the Chamber of Notables was convoked by Ismail Pasha to sanction a decree declaring that the deceased minister's property had been forfeited to the State by the fact of his having been engaged in a criminal conspiracy against the Khedivial dynasty. This Chamber, which has often been represented abroad as being the germ of a constitutional Parliament, was in reality a mere court of record, designed to give a certain fictitious authority to the arbitrary acts of the Sovereign. Its members were nominated by the Khedive; it only met when convoked by the Khedive; and its one legislative function was to approve any proposal the Khedive might condescend to make. It is reported that at the first sitting of this assembly under the reign of Ismail, the President, by the instructions of his Highness, explained to the members of the body the mode of procedure usual in European Parliaments, and asked them to divide into two parties: one, the majority, representing the Government; the other, the minority, representing the Opposition. Without a moment's hesitation every

single member took his seat on the Ministerial benches. The President thereupon, after stating in general terms the measures he proposed to submit to the Council, requested the members to make any comment or criticism they might deem desirable on the decrees he recommended to their consideration, as otherwise it would be impossible to keep up the semblance of a parliamentary debate. But, again, no deputy could be found audacious enough to even suggest the possibility that the Government might be in the wrong. Of course, with a body so constituted, the unanimous approval of the decree confiscating Ismail Pasha Sadyk's property was a foregone conclusion. The decree was then sanctioned by the Privy Council, whose members, though men of higher position and character than the Council of Notables, were almost equally subservient to the will of the ruler; and was finally signed by the then Khedive. Soon after the deposition of Ismail Pasha, the executor of Ismail Sadyk's will brought a claim against the Government for £500,000, the property of his wards, which, as he alleged, had been wrongfully confiscated. This claim was one of the demands submitted to the Commission of Liquidation. The Mufettish's estate was found, after his death, to be burdened with heavy debts, chiefly incurred in the disastrous Stock Exchange operations in which he had been latterly involved, whether on his own account or on joint account with other parties. When the Mufettish's creditors discovered that objections

were raised to the payment of their debts out of the proceeds of the confiscated estate, they brought actions against the Government before the International tribunals, and obtained judgment in their favour. The Government thereupon agreed to pay the debts of the estate on condition that the title deeds of the deceased's houses and landed estates should be handed over in exchange. These title deeds, or hodgets, as they are called in Egypt, were in the custody of the Mekemeh, and cannot by the law of Islam be handed over to any one without the consent of the owner, or, in the event of his death, of his executors. It was by no means clear how far this rule could be overridden by any decision of the Commission of Liquidation. In this particular instance no decision was arrived at. Native public opinion, though, as I have said before, very hostile to the Mufettish, strongly disapproved of the wholesale confiscation of his property and the consequent impoverishment of his children. In accordance with the advice of the Commission, a compromise was come to between the executor and the Government, in virtue of which all legal proceedings were withdrawn, and a substantial portion of the estate was restored to the family of the unfortunate Mufettish.

In every case brought before the Commission they were confronted with issues arising out of the perpetual confusion between the late Khedive in his private capacity and in his public capacity as ruler of

the State, the legality or illegality of his actions, the conflict between the respective authorities of the International code and the law of Islam, the rights of slaves either to own or bequeath property, the relative status of wives and concubines. When to all these difficulties are added the normal embarrassments of a court of arbitration, which has to decide complicated questions in a foreign country, whose language, creed, laws, usages, and ideas are utterly alien to their own, it must be admitted that, if the Commission carried out their work in a rough and ready fashion, they contrived to effect a very satisfactory liquidation of a gigantic estate, whose affairs were involved in almost inextricable embarrassments.

THE DUAL CONTROL

Tewfik's attempt at retrenchment—Economics introduced under the Dual Control—Difficulties of foreign administration—Discontent in the Soudan—Causes of the slave trade.

THE eighteen months which followed Tewfik's succession to the throne were not eventful. The new Khedive devoted his energy to reducing the extravagant expenditure which had prevailed in all the Vice-regal palaces during his father's reign. I have already mentioned that in investigating the household accounts of Abdin, his Highness ascertained that ten thousand people had had their meals daily provided for them free of any charge. Enormous as this number is, the statement does not seem incredible to any one conversant with the East. One of the first Turkish dinners I ever dined at was one given by a Pasha, exceptionally honest, and therefore by no means wealthy, to three European friends. The dinner was good of its kind, but what struck me most was not the quality, but the quantity of the viands provided; every dish contained enough to allow ten times our number to have enjoyed a hearty meal. After dinner,

our host began talking to me about the costliness of life in Cairo, and remarked—

"I have no doubt you thought my dinner an extravagant one for so small a company. But I had no power to diminish it. Everything which goes on in a household, where there is a harem, is known abroad. Everybody knows, for instance, that I am giving a dinner to-day, and knows who is dining with me. There are at least two score self-invited guests, who are dining here to-night, in another room. They are relatives, friends, retainers, old servants, slaves, and so forth, who not only consider that they have an absolute right to be feasted at my expense, whenever I give a dinner, but, what is more, are considered by the outside world to have such a right in accordance with our Oriental ideas."

Hospitality is part of the Oriental code of morals, and the fact explains a good deal which puzzles a stranger in Eastern countries. It is intelligible enough that Ismail, in the days when the purse of Fortunatus seemed to be at his disposal, and when money was of no account in his expenditure, should have kept open house for anybody who had any kind of claim upon him. In the East, a custom soon becomes a right. Upon his accession to the throne, Tewfik cut down what may be called the free list of Abdin from ten thousand to one thousand; and similar reductions were made by him in all the other palaces and in all the various departments of the Court. Economy in the East is not accounted to any

man for righteousness. I am not sure it is so in the West; and the result of Tewfik's laudable desire to make both ends meet and to live within his income did not increase his personal popularity with his own people. In every town in Egypt there were numbers of families, some one or more of whose members had had their personal comfort and convenience curtailed by the reductions Tewfik had instituted in his household expenditure, and all these families became, as the event showed, centres of disaffection towards the new order of things established under the Dual Control.

The British Controller, Major Baring, resigned his post very shortly after the close of the Commission of Liquidation, on being appointed Financial Minister of the Viceroy of India's Council, and was succeeded by Mr. (now Sir Auckland) Colvin, who held the post till the Dual Control was finally abolished. Both the Controllers were men of resolution and energy, and both set themselves seriously to work to carry out the system of retrenchment laid down by the Law of Liquidation. They wished to do the best for Egypt, but they held that their first duty was to restore financial solvency, and to see that the composition effected between Egypt and her creditors was duly enforced. Even after the very large reductions made by the Commission in the amount of the Public Debt, the interest which Egypt had still to pay absorbed fully one-half of the total revenue of the country. The result was, that while the wealthy landowners suffered

materially at the outset by the curtailment of their privileges, the fellaheen did not derive much immediate benefit from the changes under the new reign. In order to raise the funds required for the administration of the country and for the development of its resources, it was necessary to keep up the taxes at their former level, and a considerable period had to elapse before the fellaheen, over-weighted as they were then by debts contracted with the local money-lenders, began to appreciate that they were any better off than they had been in the days of the Mufettish.

Then, again, under the Dual Control the administration of the country had passed out of native hands into those of foreigners. International Boards, supported by the Commission of the Public Debt and by the Anglo-French Controllers, exercised an authority independent of, and in many cases superior to, that of the native Government. Of all the forms of government devised by human ingenuity, that of Internationalism is the one least calculated to command the sympathy or respect of a subject population, alien in race and creed to their rulers. The Khedive was at this period too inexperienced and too fearful of the possible return of his father to Egypt, to make any stand against the system of International administration, even if, which is by no means certain, he had the opportunity to do so. The Egyptians are a people very easily governed; but they require to be governed by a visible and tangible ruler,

not by a Board, still less by a body of independent Boards. The leading members of these Boards were Christians. The native Egyptians are by no means fanatical Mahometans. But they have at heart a conviction, shared more or less by all the followers of the Prophet in every part of the globe, that the creed of Islam is the one God-given faith. To their minds, the idea of a true believer in Allah and his Prophet, being subject to Christian rule, seems, if not a scandal and a shame, a flagrant anomaly. Thus, during the two first years of Tewfik's reign, the seed was being sown for the impending mutiny.

Meanwhile troubles were brewing in another quarter. General Gordon had at last succeeded in arranging terms of peace between Egypt and Abyssinia; and having, as he supposed, suppressed the slave trade in the Soudan, he resigned his governorship. He had not long quitted the country before the fruits of his administration began to make themselves manifest. The snake was scotched, but not killed. I should be sorry to seem to say a word in disparagement of a man of whom I, in common with all Englishmen, am justly proud. But the plain truth is, that "Chinese Gordon," though a hero and almost a genius, was not a great administrator. The slave trade was the one industry of the Soudan, much as cotton spinning is the one industry of Lancashire. The Dervishes earned their livelihood by obtaining ivory from Central Africa, sometimes by barter, more often by violence. When they had secured their

ivory, they could find no market for it till they had got it carried to the Nile and shipped to Egypt. In a country where there are no roads, human porterage is the only cheap method of transporting produce for long distances. The Dervishes either raided the villages or took part in local wars between savage tribes, and by fraud or force obtained large numbers of captives. These captives were loaded with ivory, driven as beasts of burden under the lash to the Nile, and there left for the most part to starve. A few of the younger and better looking were sent down for sale to Egypt or Tunis. But the staple of the slave trade of the Soudan was the demand for porterage. The only way in which this trade can ever be really suppressed is either by a permanent military occupation, such as exists at present, or by the development of roads and railroads, so as to provide an easier and cheaper mode of transport than that of catching savages and converting them into pack-horses. Roads and railroads, however, require capital for their construction. Egypt had no capital to spare, and Gordon set his face against the entrance of Europeans into the country. The pioneers of civilization are not, as a rule, a very estimable or high-minded body of men. But foreign capital will never come into a country which has not first been overrun and exploited by pioneers. Gordon, however, kept the Soudan within a ring fence, and contented himself with hanging, capturing, or ruining as many slave-traders as he could lay hands upon during his

governorship. I have little doubt they one and all richly deserved their fate, but they naturally entertained the bitterest animosity not only towards the ruler who had destroyed their trade and cowed them for a time into submission, but towards the Government in whose name he had ruled. In the days before Gordon, the Soudan had acquiesced contentedly enough in the sovereignty of Egypt. But after Gordon left—having, as he imagined, crushed the slave trade—the Dervishes determined to declare their independence. It was under the Dual Control that the military mutiny broke out under Arabi in Cairo, and that the Mahdi commenced the insurrection which Mr. Gladstone, with characteristic ignorance of all Eastern affairs, described in the House of Commons as the struggle "of a gallant people, rightly struggling to be free."

THE ARABI MUTINY

Origin of the mutiny—Wholesale reduction of army—Jealousy between Circassian and Egyptian officers—Understanding between Ismail and the discontented officers—Appointment of Mahmoud Sami as Minister of War—Order to arrest the "three colonels"—Troops intervene to prevent arrest—Emeute before Abdin palace.

APART from the general causes of discontent to which I alluded in the last chapter, there were special reasons for the state of apprehension and distrust which prevailed throughout Egypt after the downfall of Ismail Pasha. The power of the Khedivate was necessarily impaired. The authority of Europe, as embodied in the Dual Control, was certainly not increased. To the Western mind, it might seem that the fact of Ismail having been dethroned because he had incurred the displeasure of England and France, would have augmented popular respect in Egypt for the might and strength of the Western Powers. To the Eastern mind, the moral conveyed by the deposition was entirely different. England and France, as it seemed to the Egyptians, had failed in effecting the deposition of Ismail Pasha, and it was only when the Sultan came forward and gave the word of command that the

Khedive yielded to the demands of Europe. Starting from these premises, the conclusion was obvious that the Dual Control had no real power behind it other than the support of the Sultan. This delusion was not shared by the reigning Khedive or his Ministers, but it took hold of the native population, especially in the towns. So long as Ismail remained on the throne, any serious insurrection was out of the question. The mere terror of his name sufficed for the preservation of order. Unfortunately, Ismail had left, as an evil legacy to the Egyptian army, the knowledge that the civil Government was powerless as against organized military insubordination. The officers had learnt by the experience of the military demonstration, which led to the overthrow of the Responsible Ministry, that they were masters of the situation; and as soon as they ceased to have the fear of Ismail before their eyes, they proceeded to make use of their knowledge.

In the outset, the mutiny with which Arabi's name became connected was a purely military revolt, a sort of Oriental pronunciamento. The army, or, at any rate, its officers, had some reason to be discontented with the era of economy and retrenchment initiated under the Dual Control. In Ismail's day the army consisted of 45,000 men. But the Porte took advantage of the firman investing Tewfik with the Khedivate, to reduce the number of troops which Egypt was allowed to keep under arms to 18,000 men in all. The measure was probably popular with the rank and file, as the

fellaheen hated military service, and were only too glad to get back to their villages. But this reduction of the army by nearly two-thirds of its effective force entailed the retirement of some two officers out of every three, and to the officers, as a body, the loss of their commission involved the loss of income and social position. Then, too, when the new Khedive, as I have mentioned, began to set his father's domestic affairs in order, with the view of bringing down his household expenditure to a reasonable amount, he found himself saddled with the duty of making provision for any number of ladies of the Vice-regal harem, who had been left behind when Ismail went into exile. It had long been the custom to dispose of what I think may best be described as the surplus stock of the Vice-regal establishment, by giving the ladies, who had ceased to enjoy their husband's favour, in second marriage to civil and military officials in the public service. In the old days, these marriages were not unpopular, as they were commonly accompanied by wedding presents in the form of land or money; and, what was even more important, the possession of a wife connected with Court circles was regarded as a step towards promotion. But at the period when Tewfik resolved to distribute the unattached ladies of his predecessor's harem amongst the officers of the army, the case was different. The possession of a wife who had been bred or born within the walls of Abdin or Gesireh had become so common as to cease to be a distinction, while the wedding

gifts had fallen off lamentably in value. The officers complained that the wives thus thrown on their hands gave themselves airs on account of their Court connection, and encouraged all sorts of extravagant expenditure in their new homes. Then, again, there was a jealousy of long standing between the Circassian and the Egyptian officers, the latter of whom believed, that, owing to Court favouritism, their interests in the matter of pay and promotion were always sacrificed to those of the former.

It was this jealousy which formed the immediate cause of the mutiny. Ali Fehmi, a fellah officer, who had been captain of the guard at Abdin, was dismissed in favour of a Circassian. Thereupon he formed a sort of camarilla amongst the native Egyptian officers, the secret council of the organization consisting of himself, Abd el Al, and Achmed Arabi. I have long ago come to the conclusion that there is always some sort of ability about a man who, by his own efforts, pushes his way to the front in any walk of life. I have no doubt, therefore, that there must have been some force of character, some power of influencing his fellow-men, in the ignorant fellah who, later on, was supposed by his English admirers to be the chosen champion of Egyptian nationality. But in what his merits consisted, it is hard to explain. He was a native of the Delta, the son of an obscure peasant, farming his own land by his own labour and that of his sons. He was educated at a village school, where all the knowledge the teachers possess, or seek to

impart, is the committal to memory of a string of verses from the Koran. He was at one time a Boab, or, what we should call a caretaker, at the warehouses of a Levantine merchant at Alexandria, drawing a salary of a pound or so a week. He gave up the situation on being drawn by the conscription for military service. He served in the army till he was a man of forty without acquiring any special distinction. Indeed, his professional record was not of the best. He got into a scrape for making a disturbance outside the palace of Abdin shortly after Said Pasha's death. He was subsequently dismissed on a charge of corruption from a post in the transport service which he held at Massouah during the war with Abyssinia, and was for some time in disgrace. He then attended the school of the Mosque el Acbar at Cairo, and picked up a superficial smattering of Mahometan culture.

Corruption was a failing for which Ismail had no very stern disapproval, and after a brief interval of suspension, Arabi was allowed to resume service in the army. He forthwith became connected with a secret society—a common thing in all Moslem lands. Ismail contrived to obtain information about this society, and on learning that it had considerable ramifications in the army, he forthwith determined to enlist its services in the conspiracy he was then contemplating for the removal of all the foreign officials employed in the administration of Egypt. He summoned the ringleaders of the

movement to the palace, and instead of punishing or reprimanding them for having conspired against his authority, he came to a friendly understanding with them, one of whose conditions was that seventy native officers, Arabi amongst their number, were raised then and there to the rank of colonels. After this compact, Arabi and his brother officers seem to have worked harmoniously with Ismail up to the date of his deposition. It has been made a charge against Arabi that, two days after he had sworn to Ismail to fight to the last sooner than acquiesce in his dethronement by force, he was the first to pay homage to Tewfik. I think, however, the charge is unjust. Arabi probably intended to affirm by his oath his readiness to risk his life in order to resist any attempt on the part of foreign Powers to effect Ismail's dethronement by violence. When, however, he discovered that Ismail was to be deprived of his authority, not by any Christian Power, but by the orders of the Commander of the Faithful, and when he further learnt that Ismail bowed to the will of the Sultan, he may fairly have deemed himself relieved from his oath.

Meanwhile the "three colonels," as the chiefs of the native military organization were called, had enlisted the services of Mahmoud Pasha Sami, then a member of Riaz's Ministry; an Egyptian of Turkish descent, who saw an opportunity of advancing his own fortunes by associating himself with the conspiracy, and who, after the wont of Turks in Egypt, soon made

himself the master of his native fellow-conspirators. It was by his advice, if I am correctly informed, that the fellaheen officers issued a protest against the reduction of the army, and insisted on the post of Minister of War being entrusted to a native Egyptian. A Cabinet council was held, at which Mahmoud Sami was present, and at which it was decided to summon the colonels to a meeting at the Kasr el Nile barracks, on the plea of discussing their protest, and to arrest them if they persisted in their demands. Mahmoud Sami at once communicated the intentions of the Ministry to his confederates, and it was arranged that the regiments under their command should march on Kasr el Nile at the time appointed for the meeting, and rescue their commanding officers if any attempt was made to effect their arrest.

The arrangement was carried out successfully. The colonels on their arrival were informed they were to be tried by court-martial for conspiracy. But the proceedings had no sooner commenced than the mutinous regiments broke into the building, rescued their officers, and marched upon the palace of Abdin, with Arabi, Ali Fehmi, and Abd el Al at their heads. The troops stacked their arms in the square in front of the palace, while the colonels interviewed the Khedive. It was then the height of the tourist season, and all the European residents crowded down to witness an emeute, which they regarded rather as a stage spectacle than as a serious insurrection. If they expected to see fighting, they were destined

to disappointment. Riaz Pasha, General Stone—an officer of distinction in the Confederate army during the Secession War, who had been appointed by Ismail the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army,—and the British Controller, urged the Khedive to resistance. He had, however, at that time no troops on whom he could rely; and he finally yielded to the demand of the mutineers and agreed to appoint Mahmoud Sami Minister of War. The troops thereupon returned to their barracks. The emeute ended with one of those comic incidents which occur so frequently in all Oriental politics. It so happened that the bands of the insurgent regiments had a private engagement to play on the afternoon of the rising at the Esbekieh gardens, and informed their officers that they could not afford to lose the money, and that at five o'clock, emeute or no emeute, they must be at the orchestra in front of the New Continental hotel. If the bands were to go, it was by no means certain the troops would not follow. Possibly, if the Khedive had known this, he might have held out till the evening. As it was, he gave way just in time to enable the band to keep its engagement, and thus the situation was saved.

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THE NATIONALITY MOVEMENT

Arabi secures English supporters—Sir William Gregory and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt—The cry for Egyptian nationality—Daoud Pasha appointed Minister of War—Renewed demonstration of Arabi's troops.

AFTER the surrender of the Khedive to the demands of Arabi and his colleagues, the Government was for the time in the hands of the conspirators. My own impression is that the trio of colonels, having got very much what they wanted, would have preferred not to push their advantage any further. Mahmoud Sami, however, who was immeasurably superior to his fellow-conspirators both in courage and in intelligence, realized the insecurity of their position. In the event of the Khedive's regaining his authority, they were all, he knew, marked men, whose lives and property, according to Oriental ideas of justice, were justly forfeit. There was no danger of the native population rising against the military government on behalf of the Khedive. But there was a possibility, and even a probability, that the European Powers might think it their duty to intervene, in order to prevent Egypt from being ruled by a self-appointed junta. I have always held that the idea of preventing foreign

intervention—by leading public opinion abroad to believe that the Arabi mutiny was a national movement in favour of Egyptian independence—was one hardly likely to have been originated by an Oriental. At this period, however, Egypt was crowded with cosmopolitan adventurers, who found fishing in muddy waters a lucrative occupation. The downfall of Ismail and the establishment of the Dual Control had dealt a grave blow to their interests; and the partisans of the old *régime* had some reason for hoping that, if the military insurrection became formidable, and if the Powers were reluctant to suppress the mutiny themselves, they might solve the difficulty by replacing Ismail upon the throne. The credit, however, if credit there is, of having induced Arabi to assume the character of a political reformer and of a champion of Egyptian nationality, is chiefly due to fellow-countrymen of our own, though I still entertain the conviction that they were only the unconscious tools of some more powerful personality.

At this time there were residing in Cairo, as visitors, two English gentlemen, more or less known by repute, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt and the late Sir William Gregory. They had both travelled a good deal in the East. They both possessed that superficial acquaintance with Eastern manners and customs which most of its possessors consider a justification for posing as authorities on all Oriental questions. They both were on the look-out for any means of bringing their names before the British public. Mr. Blunt had had at

one time poetical aspirations, and had been regarded as a young bard of promise amongst our minor poets. During the Franco-German war, he acquired a certain amount of notoriety for the extravagance with which he espoused the cause of France, and later on he made himself conspicuous as an Englishman who was more Oriental than any Moslem bred and born. When our fellow-countrymen go in for what I may call the "cult" of a foreign race or creed, they always remind me of the amateur who, when he acted the Moor of Venice, thought it necessary to black himself all over, from the soles of his feet to the tip of his forehead. It may show want of imagination on my part, but I could never take Mr. Blunt's Orientalism seriously, after I found out that in order to sustain his character, as a denizen of the East, he used, on arrival at Cairo, to be met at the station by his camel and ride to Shepheard's Hotel, a distance of barely five minutes' walk, sooner than take a carriage like a commonplace tourist. Sir William Gregory was a man of far higher ability, who had been very near achieving eminence in public life. He had sat for many years in the House of Commons, had earned distinction as a speaker, and was looked upon as in the running for Cabinet rank, but somehow had been distanced in the race for political distinction by men of more application, though less ability. He had been at one time well known on the turf; he had been an enthusiastic partisan of the Confederate cause, and had, I believe, thereby sustained heavy losses. He had

a claim upon the Liberal party for long and loyal service at Westminster. What is more important, he had many personal friends among the leaders of the party, and by their aid he was appointed Governor of Ceylon. It was not long after his retirement from this post that he came out to Egypt, at the period when Arabi was just coming into notice as the ring-leader of the military mutiny. I fancy Sir William had hoped to have further promotion given him after his Governorship had expired. He discovered, however, on his return to England, that other men had come to the front in his absence, that the whole aspect of British politics had been changed by the Home Rule agitation, and that under Mr. Gladstone's leadership the Palmerstonian Liberals had lost their political influence. He was still a man in the full vigour of life, conscious of high talents, and very reluctant to be placed on the shelf. No one can blame him severely if he welcomed any opportunity of attracting the attention of the British public, and such an opportunity appeared to be offered by coming forward as the champion of Egyptian nationality, represented in the persons of Arabi and his fellow-conspirators.

Thus it came to pass that these two British gentlemen constituted themselves the self-appointed advisers of Arabi; and it was through their instrumentality that he was led to present himself before the British public in the guise of a reformer anxious to redress the grievances of his fellow-countrymen, of

a champion of Egyptian nationality, and of a patriot desirous to establish the independence of his country and to free her from foreign rule. I should doubt extremely how far Arabi understood the phrases his English counsellors placed into his mouth, or whether he even read the letters composed for him, which bore the signature of "Achmed the Egyptian." But there can be no question that the crusade on behalf of Arabi, set on foot in the English press by Mr. Wilfrid Blunt and Sir William Gregory, and caught up by that section of the British public which is always ready to espouse the cause of any oppressed nationality outside the British Isles, did a great deal to encourage the leaders of the military insurrection in Egypt, and what was more important, to hamper the action of the British Government in respect of the mutiny. To a certain, though very limited extent, the cry of Egypt for the Egyptians found a hearing amongst the native population. Patriotism, in our Western sense of the word, has no existence in the East. The fact of men being born on the same soil, and subject to the same rulers, does not there constitute any special bond of union. No Egyptian, except in the columns of a European newspaper, would dream of describing himself as an Egyptian. He would call himself an Arab, a Turk, a Copt, an Armenian, a Syrian, a Bedouin, or a Jew, but an Egyptian never. Community of creed is a tie potent enough; so is community of language to a lesser degree; but between Turks and Arabs, Copts and Armenians, a community of Fatherland is rather

a cause of enmity than a connecting link. In as far as the fellaheen formed any distinct idea of what was meant by Egypt for the Egyptians, they understood it to mean that Arabi proposed to drive the Christians out of Egypt, and thereby to liberate the country from the necessity of paying taxes to provide the interest due upon the foreign debt. As to any demand for self-government, it was a thing never thought of by the mass of the native population. Egypt for the Egyptians was in fact an article for foreign exportation, not for home consumption. As such, it served its purpose.

Meanwhile events moved onwards. Mahmoud, as Minister of War, did everything in his power to secure the support of the army; and the Khedive grew alarmed at the extent to which his personal authority was being daily further undermined. He suddenly replaced Mahmoud Sami at the War Office by his own brother-in-law, Daoud Pasha, a Circassian by birth, and reputed to be a man of courage. The new Minister signalized his accession to office by giving orders to the regiments which had taken part in the mutiny to leave Cairo for the provinces, Arabi, with his regiment, being instructed to take his departure for Alexandria. The answer received at the War Office was that the regiments stationed in Cairo were going that afternoon to Abdin, to demand the dismissal of the Ministry, the convocation of a national assembly, and the raising of the army to its full force. This communication took the Khedive completely by surprise. Most of the Consuls-General,

the Ministers, and high foreign officials, were absent from the capital, as the early part of September is the dead season at Cairo. In default of any other counsellor on whom he could rely, Tewfik Pasha applied to the British Controller-General, who urged his Highness to refuse the demands of the insurgent soldiery, and to arrest Arabi, as their leader, on his presenting himself at the palace. With a courage worthy of his race, Mr. Colvin offered to stand by the Khedive, and share any risk the Khedive might encounter if Arabi declined to yield.

It is foolish to speculate on what might have happened if Tewfik had followed this advice. He was, as later events proved, by no means devoid of personal courage, but his courage was of a passive, not of an active, order. His instinct, save under very exceptional conditions, was to meet every difficulty by postponement, not by action. After some hesitation, he resolved to temporize, and finding that Arabi would consent to withdraw his troops if the Ministry were dismissed, he agreed to the demands of the leaders of the mutiny, which were coupled with the express condition that the new Minister of War should not be a Circassian, and that no member of the reigning family should be included in the Ministry. Cherif Pasha, much against his will, consented to accept the presidency of the new administration, in which Mahmoud Sami resumed his old position of Minister of War. Order was thus restored for the time without any incident having occurred to justify the intervention of foreign Powers.

THE CHAMBER OF NOTABLES

Convocation of Chamber of Notables—Programme of the Chamber England and France protest against programme—Joint Anglo-French note.

I SHOULD add that Arabi's demand for the dismissal of the Ministry included two other stipulations extorted from the Khedive when, to quote words attributed to him at the time, "he was between two fires." The first stipulation was an immediate increase of pay, which was all the soldiers really cared about. The second stipulation was the convocation of the Chamber of Notables, a concession to which probably neither the Khedive nor the army attached any great significance.

The latter demand was made, it may safely be assumed, upon the recommendation of Arabi's English supporters. It was their policy to keep the military aspect of the Arabi insurrection in the background, and to create an impression abroad, and especially in England, that the insurgents had risen in revolt for the purpose of establishing popular self-government in Egypt, and of rescuing the country from

foreign domination. I have no right to say that either Mr. Wilfrid Blunt or Sir William Gregory were not sincerely convinced, that Arabi was a genuine patriot—a sort of Garibaldi of the Nile. But upon this assumption I must perforce give them credit for less intelligence than I should have otherwise supposed them to possess. What is even more unintelligible to me, is how my old friend Sir William, a thorough man of the world, with all an Irishman's keen sense of humour, could ever have looked on Arabi in the light of a constitutional reformer. I had the honour of being introduced at this period to "Achmed the Egyptian" by Sir William, and the one thing that struck me in his appearance was his look of stolid stupidity. I attach no great value to cursory impressions of this kind. The only reason why I record my impression is, that it has been confirmed by everybody I have known in Egypt who ever came into relations with Arabi. One and all agreed in saying that he was devoid of any kind of apparent ability, and had little or none of the shrewdness so common amidst the fellaheen.

However this may be, the attempt to identify the Arabi mutiny with a constitutional agitation in favour of freedom and independence was a clever card, played with great chance of success. Mr. Gladstone was then at the height of his popularity at home, and the ideas he represented were still in the ascendant. He had a genuine dislike to any extension of our Imperial liabilities, and a special dislike to any such

extension in the direction of Egypt. No doubt the Franco-German war had done a good deal to weaken popular sympathy with oppressed nationalities; but still there was enough of the old Liberal leaven left in England to have made it difficult for any British Government to resort to armed intervention for the sake of suppressing a rising in Egypt, which, however irregular in form, might be represented as a popular movement in favour of constitutional self-government.

Within a few days of the successful pronunciamento, Cherif was induced to make Arabi Assistant Secretary of War, with the view of enlisting his services on behalf of the Ministry. The only practical result was that Arabi immediately began to intrigue with his chief, Mahmoud Sami, in order to oust Cherif from the Premiership. It was on Christmas Day, 1881, that the Chamber of Notables held its first sitting. The members of the Chamber being Egyptians, were naturally in favour of the dominant power, and, as for the time being, power lay in the hands of the military party, they voted in accordance with the instructions they received from the Ministry of War, even if these instructions were opposed to those given by the Khedive or by the nominal head of the Ministry. The programme submitted to the Chamber of Notables by the leaders of the mutiny, and adopted by them as a matter of course, was as follows:—

The Budget was in future to be voted by the

Chamber, which was also to have the right to control the administration, to initiate legislation, and to hold the Ministers responsible directly to themselves instead of indirectly through the Sovereign. In the abstract, the demands were not unreasonable, supposing Egypt was to become in the near future a country with parliamentary institutions. But no such idea was ever entertained, least of all by the military party, and was, moreover, utterly inconsistent with the personal government of the Khedive and with the fiscal arrangements guaranteed indirectly by the establishment of the Dual Control, in virtue of which the foreign bondholders had agreed to a composition, of which Egypt, at all events, had no cause to complain. France, after her wont, took the lead in demanding intervention on behalf of the bondholders. At the instigation of Gambetta, the then French Prime Minister, France and England agreed to address a joint note to the Khedive, declaring that

"the maintenance of his Highness upon the throne, in the terms laid down by the Sultan's firmans, and officially recognized by the two Governments, is alone able to guarantee for the present and the future good order and prosperity in Egypt, in which the Anglo-French Governments are equally interested."

The joint note terminated with the statement—

"that the two Governments being closely associated in the resolve to guard by their united efforts against all cause of complication, internal or external, which might menace

the order of things established in Egypt, did not doubt that the assurance publicly given of their intention in this respect would tend to divert the dangers to which the Government of Egypt might be exposed, and which would certainly find England and France united to oppose them."

These were "brave words, my masters," and would have probably produced the result anticipated, if the men, who at this period directed the action of Egypt, had believed in their sincerity. Unfortunately, the leaders of the mutiny received assurances from their friends in England that the British Government did not contemplate armed intervention, and these assurances were confirmed by the discovery that, almost immediately after the British Government had agreed to sign the joint note, Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador in Paris, received orders from the Foreign Office to inform the French Government that, by signing the note, England did not understand she had committed herself to any particular mode of action. The plain truth is, that Mr. Gladstone was bitterly opposed to any form of active intervention in Egypt. In order to avoid the hateful necessity, England suggested the expediency of Turkey being invited to restore order in Egypt by the despatch of a Turkish army. This suggestion was dropped in deference to the positive refusal of France to entertain the idea of a Turkish occupation of Egypt. Suddenly the Gambetta Ministry was turned out of office by one of the cabals,

of such common occurrence under the third Republic, and M. de Freycinet succeeded to the Premiership. The new Premier was guided in his Egyptian policy by M. de Lesseps, who was a strong partisan—if not of Arabi personally—of the old order of things under Ismail's rule, and who contended that the true interest of France was to leave England to incur alone the risk and unpopularity of resisting the national movement in Egypt. The only measure which, under the changed position of affairs, suggested itself to Lord Granville, was to send out a circular, requesting the various European Powers to deliberate in common as to the settlement of the Egyptian Question. Time went by, and neither France nor England made sign of any intention to carry out the veiled threat of intervention contained in the joint note. Sir Edward Malet, our then Consul-General in Egypt, kept on urging the necessity for action, if Egypt were not to be allowed to pass under the control of a military dictatorship. But his representations met with no response. Tewfik became convinced that neither France nor England were prepared to intervene for his protection. Under these circumstances, he had practically no choice, except to come to the terms with the insurgent leaders. By their orders, the Chamber of Notables sent a deputation to the Palace, demanding the dismissal of the Cherif Ministry. Tewfik raised no objection, and Mahmoud Sami, the leader of the mutiny, was appointed Prime Minister, while Arabi became Minister of War. Thus within a year the

administration of Egypt had passed, as the result of the mutiny, absolutely and entirely out of the hands of the Khedive into those of a clique of obscure officers, most of whose names had never been heard of even in Egypt twelve months before.

THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Programme of the Mahmoud Ministry—Circassian officers arrested and sentenced to deportation to the Soudan—Sentence remitted by Khedive—Deposition of Khedive threatened—Arrival of Anglo-French squadron—English and French Consuls-General demand Arabi's exile, who forthwith resigns—Army demands Arabi's re-instatement as Minister—Khedive gives way and asks for Turkish intervention—Dervish Pasha sent by Sultan as Turkish Commissioner.

THE Chamber of Notables had served its purpose, and retired into obscurity. In as far as I can learn, the law, in virtue of which the Chamber was to vote the Budget, was never formally enacted, though the necessity for its immediate introduction was stated, in the programme issued by Mahmoud on becoming Premier, to be the first duty of the new Ministry. Upon the appearance of the programme issued by the new military Ministry and its approval by the Khedive, the Dual Control virtually ceased to exist. The Controllers resigned their posts, in compliance with the instructions they had received from home; and with their resignation the triumph of the insurrection was complete. The Khedive had become a mere figure-head. There was no immediate risk

of foreign intervention. Now was the time to carry out the reforms which Arabi and his fellow-agitators were supposed to have at heart. Instead of this, as soon as they got power into their hands, the leaders of the mutiny proceeded to gratify their personal animosities. Some fifty Circassian officers of the Egyptian army were arrested on the charge of being concerned in a conspiracy to assassinate Arabi. Their trial by court-martial was conducted behind closed doors. Torture was reported to have been employed to obtain admissions of guilt; and finally the whole lot, including Osman Pasha Rifki, a former Minister of War, were sentenced to deportation to the Soudan for the term of their natural lives, a term which, under the circumstances, was not likely to be of long duration. Tewfik, however, refused to confirm the sentence, on the plea that he was not convinced of the guilt of the accused officers. I suspect, however, he was stimulated to assert his authority by the knowledge that the Circassian officers represented the only element in the Egyptian army on which he could rely with any confidence. Acting on the advice of the Consuls-General, his Highness reduced the sentence passed by the court-martial to one of simple banishment. Mahmoud Sami replied that popular indignation at the attempted assassination of Arabi was so intense, that he feared the refusal of the Khedive to inflict adequate punishment on the convicted criminals would be followed by a general massacre of the foreigners in Egypt. He

also stated that the Ministry had determined to reassemble the Chamber of Notables, and to hold no further intercourse with the Khedive till the Chamber had decided on the question at issue between the Sovereign and his Ministers.

It was matter of common notoriety that the Notables were to be called upon to vote the deposition of the Khedive. For once, however, the members of the Chamber displayed something approaching to independence. They were mortally afraid of incurring the displeasure of the masters of the army. At the same time they were equally afraid of giving grave umbrage to the reigning Sovereign, so long as it was currently reported that an Anglo-French fleet was about to be sent to Alexandria with troops on board in order to uphold the authority of the Khedive. The Notables, therefore, on one pretext or the other, delayed coming to any decision, and they were still deliberating when intelligence was received that the Anglo-French squadron was already on its way. Forthwith the national party changed their attitude, and tendered their submission to the Khedive. On the 19th of May the squadron actually arrived, and was found to consist of a French and English ironclad, accompanied by a couple of gunboats. There were no troops on board sufficient for any military operations inland The French Admiral had instructions only "to give a moral support to the Khedive." The British Admiral was ordered "to support the Khedive and to protect British subjects and Europeans." For the latter purpose,

and for this purpose alone, he was authorized "to land a force if required, such force not to leave protection of ships' guns without instructions from home."

The first step in the mutiny, which had placed the welfare of Egypt, the interests of her creditors, and the safety of her foreign residents at the mercy of a military dictatorship, had been taken on the 11th of February, 1881. It was not till the 29th of May, 1882, that the Governments represented by the Dual Control took any action to uphold their authority in Egypt; and even then this action was little more than a naval demonstration. The perusal of the Blue Books, containing the correspondence which passed between Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay during these fifteen momentous months, when the fate of Egypt was hanging in the balance, does not support the theory that our diplomacy was directed by an astute and deliberate design to acquire possession of the valley of the Nile. There is something almost pathetic in Lord Granville's persistent anxiety to avoid committing himself to any definite line of action. His favourite suggestion was that Turkey should be requested to put down the revolt, either by sending a Turkish general to restore discipline in the Egyptian army, or, if the presence of a general was not deemed sufficient, by despatching a Turkish army to Egypt, accompanied by an English and a French officer, whose duty it would be to see that the Turkish system of restoring discipline was not in too flagrant opposition to European ideas. It was only

when the deposition of the Khedive by the army seemed likely to become an accomplished fact, that France suggested the despatch of an Anglo-French squadron to Alexandria, and that England reluctantly adopted the suggestion.

Immediately on the arrival of the squadron, the English and French Consuls-General sent a joint note to the Ministry, calling on them to resign office, insisting on Arabi quitting Egypt, and demanding that his military colleagues should retire from Cairo and Alexandria into the provinces. On the day following the receipt of this note, the Ministry resigned, and announced that the cause of their resignation was that the Khedive, by approving the above note, which had been submitted to his Highness by the Consuls-General, had re-established foreign intervention in the affairs of Egypt. On this announcement being made, the officers of the regiments stationed in Alexandria met in secret and declared that they would not allow Arabi to resign, and that unless he was reinstated in office during the course of the day, they could not guarantee the maintenance of public order. This declaration was telegraphed direct to the Khedive at Cairo, and at first the Khedive resolved to follow the advice of the English and French Consuls-General, who urged him not to give way. Later on, however, on the same day, a local deputation, containing a considerable number of Notables, presented themselves at the palace, and implored the Khedive to yield, as otherwise their own lives

would be forfeited. The pressure was too strong to be resisted, and before night had arrived Arabi was reinstated in office. Great excuse must be made for the vacillation displayed on this and other occasions by Tewfik Pasha. In the early days of the mutiny, he might have crushed it by appealing to the popular dread still attaching to the name of the Effendina. But after this dread had been dispelled, and the army had gone over to the side of the mutineers, he had nothing to fall back upon. The Consuls-General were always calling on him to assert himself, but they could only offer him the benefit of their moral support. It is all very well to say he ought to have placed himself at the head of his troops. But when you know beforehand your troops will decline to follow you into action, the advantage of placing yourself at their head is by no means obvious.

For a few days there was an interval of comparative tranquillity, but the air was still full of reports of impending attacks on the Christian population of Egypt. Even when these reports were most rife, the British Admiral declined to take any steps for the protection of his fellow-countrymen in Egypt, except stating his readiness to protect the embarkation of Europeans who might wish to take refuge on the British ships lying in the harbour of Alexandria. As a last resource, Tewfik Pasha adopted a course which must have been bitterly distasteful to him, as a descendant of Mahomet Ali, and besought the Sultan to send an Imperial Commissioner to Egypt to assist

in the restoration of order. The Sultan acceded gladly to the request, and a special Envoy of the Ottoman Government, Dervish Pasha, made his entry into Cairo before a week had passed. His first act on arrival was—after the wont of his class—to arrange with the Court on the one hand, and with the Ministry on the other, as to the remuneration he should be entitled to receive in return for his support of their respective interests. When these preliminaries were settled, he proceeded to assure both parties that they might rely upon all their grievances being redressed by the intervention of the Suzerain of Egypt, the Commander of the Faithful. With the inborn arrogance of his race, he treated the Egyptian Ministers with unveiled contempt, and—if a story told by Sir Mackenzie Wallace is correct—recalled at a meeting of the Cabinet in which he took part the story of the massacre of the Mamelukes by Mahomet Ali, and requested Arabi's attention to the fact, that the one Mameluke who escaped was "singularly lucky."

THE MASSACRES OF ALEXANDRIA

Difficulty of ascertaining truth about the massacres—Suspicion points to Arabi as *particeps criminis*—Arabi decorated by Sultan after the massacres—France declines joining England in any armed intervention, and recalls her fleet.

If truth lies at the bottom of a well, it may be safely asserted that the well, wherein lies concealed the real truth about any popular outbreak, must be of the very deepest order. When the outbreak is mixed up with questions of race and creed, the impossibility of ascertaining what actually did take place becomes more hopeless than ever. Those among my readers who "remember Mitchelstown," and recollect the utter conflict of evidence as to what occurred in the conflict between the Home Rule demonstrators and the Irish constabulary, will probably be able to realize the impossibility of solving the far more complicated problem as to what was the true character of the Alexandria massacres of the 11th of June, 1882.

The question, how many people were actually killed in the riots, is never likely to be answered. The broad fact, however, that a number of Europeans were suddenly attacked in the streets by a mob of

Mahometans, and literally in many cases beaten to death, is not open to discussion. Nor can there be any dispute as to the fact that the Egyptian police made no effort to suppress the riots for several hours, but that the moment the military authorities came to the conclusion the outrages had better cease, order was restored at once. From these facts it is easy to form an opinion as to where the responsibility for the massacres ought by rights to rest.

If the riots had taken place at Tantah or Mansourah, or even Cairo, there would have been more ground for the theory that they were due to a spontaneous outburst of religious fanaticism. But more than twenty years ago Alexandria was, in outward aspect, an European city, situated on Egyptian soil. With the exception of the camels and the palm-trees, there was little to show that you were in the land of the Crescent. The trade was entirely in European hands; the shops, stores, houses, and public buildings were of the European type. For all practical purposes, the European element was then, as it is now, the dominant one in Alexandria, which was about the last place in all Egypt where a Mahdi would have ever dreamt of preaching a holy war for the destruction of the Giaour. The more one knows of the East, the less disposed one becomes to dogmatize about its creeds. But, in as far as I can form an opinion, I hold that wherever there is a Mahometan population, there is always a risk—a remote and latent risk, if you like—of an outburst of popular fanaticism against

the Christians in their midst. Amongst the humbler class of Moslems, their religion is part and parcel of their everyday life, to an extent which foreigners, who have not lived in the East, or, living there, have kept their eyes closed, find it hard to realize. The followers of the Prophet may be, and often are, on the most friendly relations with their Christian neighbours; but at the bottom of their hearts they never quite forget that their neighbours are Giaours, whom Allah, for some inscrutable reason, allows to flourish and multiply, but whose extermination is declared by his words, as expounded by his Prophet, "to be the duty incumbent on every true believer." Happily, mankind is never as fanatical as its creeds would lead us to expect, and as its convictions would justify it in being.

The circumstances connected with the Alexandria riots point to the conclusion that they were not due to any unforeseen outburst of fanatic zeal. In Oriental countries government is mainly conducted by secret information. It is the duty and the interest of every police officer, who desires promotion, to let his superiors know beforehand the reports current in the bazaars. I find it therefore utterly impossible to suppose that an organized conspiracy could have been arranged in Alexandria for an attack on the Christians without its being known to the police, and through them to the local authorities—military, as well as civil. The day and the hour selected for the outbreak seem to imply the connivance of these authorities. On a midsummer

Sunday afternoon all the wealthy European merchants are away in their summer abodes along the coast. The shops and stores are deserted by the European clerks and shopmen; and therefore on such a day and hour the rioters were less likely to meet with any formidable resistance. If the attack had not been arranged beforehand, with the approval of the authorities, it is incredible that the police would not have interfered at once, or that, if they needed assistance, they would not have called on the army for support. But, as I have said, both the police and the chiefs of the army declined to put down the riot till they had received orders from Arabi, who was then at Cairo. At the urgent request of Dervish Pasha, Arabi telegraphed from Cairo, instructing the troops to restore order. This was done without any resistance on the part of the mob, who dispersed at once.

The legal adage, *Cui prodest ille fecit*, confirms the conviction that Arabi was the real author of the riots, which ended intentionally, or unintentionally, in a massacre. It is obvious that if he could have persuaded the public, both at home and abroad, that there was a serious risk of a wholesale massacre of the Christians in Egypt, owing to popular indignation at foreign intervention, and that his personal influence, as Minister of War, was alone capable of averting such a catastrophe, his position would have been immensely strengthened. I am quite willing to give Arabi the benefit of the doubt, and to admit the possibility of the outbreak of fanaticism—which he, or his agents,

had approved, if they had not actually initiated—having gone to further lengths than he had foreseen. Still the hard fact remains that this outbreak resulted in the brutal murder of some two score of Europeans, to take the lowest calculation, and that these crimes were attended with circumstances of exceptional atrocity. Two Englishmen, Mr. Ribton and Mr. Pibworth, were literally done to death in the streets of Alexandria, and the British Consul, Mr. Cookson, was seriously wounded while proceeding to the police office, at the invitation of the Governor. For the murders committed on that black Sunday in Alexandria, Arabi was morally, if not legally, responsible.

Of course Arabi repudiated all responsibility for the crimes committed by his partisans. Under his orders, a Commission of Inquiry was appointed to investigate the causes of the riots. The president of this Commission was Omar Pasha Lutfi, the then Governor of Alexandria, who, by his refusal to take immediate action in order to suppress the outbreak, lay open to grave suspicions. The inquiry was conducted under Omar Pasha's presidency, with the view of proving that the European community had provoked the outrages to which they fell victims ; but the investigation was so manifestly one-sided, that the British barrister appointed to attend the proceedings, on behalf of the British Consulate, withdrew from the case. The Commission thereupon collapsed without coming to any decision. The Sultan shortly afterwards sent Arabi the grand cordon of the Medjedieh,

in recognition of the services he had rendered to Islam; and the order was personally handed to the Minister by his Highness, the Khedive.

This may be said to have been the culminating point of Arabi's short-lived triumph. Fortunately, the excesses committed by his partisans—whether with or without his direct sanction—had overshot the mark. Throughout all the time that Englishmen were being beaten to death in the streets of Alexandria a British fleet was lying in the harbour. The officers in command were debarred by their instructions from landing troops for the rescue of their fellow-countrymen. On the news of the massacres, perpetrated within cannon shot of the British fleet, reaching England, there was an outburst of popular feeling, which no Government and no party could resist. At last Mr. Gladstone was compelled to give his consent to armed intervention in Egypt. The Channel Squadron was despatched to Alexandria. The alleged object of its despatch was represented to be the obtaining of compensation for the losses sustained by British subjects during the massacres, and no sign was given of any action being contemplated for the restoration of order in Egypt by the aid of the British fleet. Even so mild a proposal as that suggested by our Foreign Office failed to command the adhesion of the French Government. The truth is, as I have mentioned before, that M. de Lesseps' influence, which at this period was very great in French political circles, was exercised in opposition to any joint intervention

in Egyptian affairs on the part of France. He represented to the then Prime Minister, M. de Freycinet, that the suppression of the so-called National party, led by Arabi, would tax the whole resources of England, and that if France abstained from committing herself to any hostile action, she would be able when both parties to the struggle were exhausted, to intervene without incurring the unpopularity of intervention, and thereby render herself the paramount Power in Egypt. Trusting to these representations, M. de Freycinet informed Lord Lyons that his Government had determined *not* to instruct the French Admiral to associate himself with the English Admiral in any armed intervention in Egyptian affairs. These instructions were carried out by the departure of the French fleet from Alexandria to Port Said on the eve of the bombardment, and thus England, fortunately for herself, but by no merit of her own, was left to protect her own interests, for herself and by herself.

THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Khedive leaves Cairo for Alexandria—Difficulties of his position—Arabi orders armament of harbour forts—British Admiral demands cessation of armament as being inconsistent with safety of British fleet—Arabi refuses compliance—Bombardment commenced and Egyptian forts silenced on the same day—Arabi withdraws army to Kafr Douar, and advises Khedive to demand a truce—Khedive places himself under British protection and dismisses Arabi—Chamber of Notables protests against Arabi's dismissal and repudiates authority of the Khedive.

It is not my purpose to enter at any length upon the military aspect of the campaigns which ended in the British occupation of Egypt. My object in these pages is to give an intelligible account of the chain of circumstances which have rendered Egypt, to all practical intents and purposes, a dependency of the British Empire. Nobody is less disposed than I am to underrate the importance of our military occupation. It has been throughout, and is still to-day, the bottom fact of the situation. But the broad results of this occupation are scarcely, if at all, affected by the character of the military operations through which it was brought about. To any one who wishes for fuller details of these operations than

the limits of my space and the scope of my narrative will permit of my giving, I would recommend my friend Mr. Charles Royle's excellent narrative of the Egyptian campaigns.

To return then to my story. On the day following the massacres, the Khedive, accompanied by Dervish Pasha, left Cairo for Alexandria. The British fleet was then anchored in the harbour, within a short distance of the palace of Ras-el-Tin, where his Highness, as usual, took up his abode. A more difficult position than the one he was then placed in cannot well be conceived. His life, so long as he remained on Egyptian soil, was absolutely at the mercy of the insurgents, who distrusted him, not altogether without reason. At any moment it lay in the power of Arabi and his colleagues to proclaim his deposition and pronounce his death. It was open to him to secure his personal safety by accepting the refuge offered him on the English fleet. His Highness, however—in common, for that matter, with the rest of the world—had no certainty as to how far the British Government was prepared to carry out armed intervention, and in the event of their not being so prepared, his restoration to the throne, or even his return to Egypt, became extremely problematical. A consideration which, I think, weighed with him yet more strongly, was that his pride of birth and race and creed forebade his accepting the hospitality proffered him by England. After all, he was still Khedive of Egypt, the nominal ruler of a country

whose shores might any day be invaded by an armed force, landed from the British fleet. His place, therefore, was in Egypt, with his own people, and with them he decided to remain, be the consequences what they might. Having made up his mind, he adhered to it with a passive courage for which his previous vacillation, when active courage was required, had not prepared even those who knew him best.

His position, then, was this. He was virtually a prisoner in his own palace, yet, nominally, he was head of the State, and it was in his name that the Ministers, who had rebelled against his authority, issued the decrees and orders he was required to sign. It was with Tewfik's consent that Arabi collected an army round Alexandria and set to work manning the fortresses, which were supposed to defend the port and the city. Whether with or without just cause, the Admiral in command of the British fleet—then Sir Beauchamp Seymour, now Lord Alcester—held that these preparations endangered the safety of the squadron, and announced his intention of bombarding the forts, unless they were surrendered and their guns dismantled. The Khedive presided at a Cabinet Council, at which it was determined to refuse this demand, and continue the armament of the forts. At this council a reply was sent to the British Admiral, concluding with the following words: "If you persist in opening fire, the Government reserves its freedom of action, and leaves with you the responsibility of this act of aggression." In the course of the same

day the Khedive shifted his quarters to his palace at Ramleh, lying some four miles east of Alexandria, on the ground that, in the event of the bombardment taking place, the palace of Ras-el-Tin lay in the line of fire.

The British fleet opened fire soon after daybreak on the following morning. The first shot was directed against the fort of Ras-el-Tin. The Egyptian forts replied, and it was not till late in the afternoon that they were all reduced to silence. Very little harm to the town itself had been done by the bombardment. Arabi, it appeared, sent various messages to the Khedive at Ramleh, describing the gallantry of the Egyptian troops, and foretelling their success. The Khedive in return offered his congratulations; so, at least, Arabi was in the habit of asserting. In the evening Arabi arrived at Ramleh, and informed his Highness that the forts were silenced, and no further defence was possible. He recommended that negotiations should be set on foot for the conclusion of a truce. The advice was adopted, and the greater part of the day, following the bombardment, was taken up by abortive negotiations, whose main object appeared to be to gain time. In the course of the afternoon Arabi withdrew the whole of his army to Kafr-Douar, and left Alexandria at the mercy of a lawless, panic-stricken and infuriated mob. The rioters set fire to the European quarter, broke open the shops, destroyed everything they could not carry away; maltreated, maimed, or murdered all Europeans they came across,

and committed every atrocity which greed or lust or fanaticism could suggest. The horrors of the Paris Commune were re-enacted in Alexandria after an Oriental fashion, though, happily, for one night only. On the following morning a force of marines was landed from the fleet, and order was once more restored.

Probably the real truth as to the relations between Tewfik and Arabi at this critical period never have been known, and never will be known. My own impression is that—to use a metaphor intelligible to all poker experts—they were in the position of two players, either of whom, in as far as his adversary was aware, might hold the joker in his hand. They were both playing for their fortunes, possibly for their lives. They were both afraid of each other. Arabi, up to the day of his withdrawal from Alexandria, continued to surround the palace of Ramleh with troops, on whose loyalty to himself he could, or thought he could, rely. But when it came to ordering the troops to act, as against the Khedive, his courage failed. Tewfik, on the other hand, was convinced that Arabi intended to get rid of him, but shrunk from any active opposition to his Mayor of the Palace, so long as he was not assured that England was determined to uphold his cause. Finally, Tewfik Pasha, if I may use the term, bluffed the longest, and Arabi, on the Khedive's protest, withdrew the troops which had been stationed around his palace. Upon the withdrawal of the regiments, by whom he was virtually kept prisoner, his Highness

communicated to the British Admiral his desire to return to Ras-el-Tin, where his personal safety would now be more secure than it was at Ramleh. The Khedive then drove with imperturbable coolness through the streets of Alexandria, crowded as they then were by an infuriated mob, to Ras-el-Tin, where he was received with the honours due to his rank by a force of British marines.

The die was cast; and from that moment Tewfik made up his mind to dissociate himself from all further complicity with Arabi. On the day following his return to Ras-el-Tin, he ordered the leader of the insurgents to come to the Palace, and, on his refusal, dismissed him from the post of Minister of War. The decree was issued on the 22nd of July, that is, eleven days after the bombardment. It is characteristic of the "facing-both-ways" attitude his Highness was compelled to assume at this period, by the exigencies of his position, that the decree depriving Arabi of his Ministerial functions justified his dismissal, on the ground that he had offered inadequate resistance to the British fleet, that he had not opposed the landing of the British troops, and that he had withdrawn the Egyptian forces from Alexandria without the permission of the Khedive. Thereupon Arabi threw off the mask, despatched a telegram to the Sultan, declaring, "that being provoked into war he was in possession of all that was necessary to overcome his enemies," and assuring his Majesty of his absolute confidence in the ruler of Islam. A few days later,

the Chamber of Notables was reassembled at Cairo, and, by the orders of Arabi, issued a decree, stating that—

"Arabi Pasha was to be upheld as Minister of War, entrusted with the command of the Egyptian army and full authority in all that concerned military operations, and that the orders of the Khedive and his Ministers were henceforth null and void."

This decree was signed by the chief Ulemas, the religious authorities of Cairo, and by all the leading members of the Chamber of Notables. Thus for the moment, there were two rival Governments in Egypt: one, that of the Khedive, supported indirectly by Great Britain; the other, that of Arabi, supported by the Egyptian army; and both professing equal hostility to the British invasion of Egyptian territory. Yet, soon after the appearance of this decree, his Highness requested Mr. Auckland Colvin, in whom he reposed greater confidence than he did in any of his native advisers, to urge upon the British Government the necessity for prompt and decisive action, in order to arrest the growth of Arabi's authority in Egypt. Indeed the whole attitude of Tewfik Pasha at this period is one of those complicated skeins, whose unravelment exceeds the capacity of any intellect other than that of an Oriental born and bred.

BRITISH INTERVENTION

British army sent to Egypt under Sir Garnet Wolseley—Conference at Constantinople—British Government proposes self-denying ordinance—Occupation of Suez Canal—Opposition of M. de Lesseps.

IT was on the 20th of July, just after Arabi had committed a direct act of war by an attempt to cut off the water supply of Alexandria, that the British Government resolved to despatch a British army to Egypt in order to suppress the military mutiny organized by Arabi and his fellow-officers. In announcing the despatch of the expedition, which was to be commanded by Lord Wolseley—then General Sir Garnet Wolseley—Mr. Gladstone went out of his way to contend that the landing of British troops in Egypt was not an act of war. Whatever may be thought of the contention, I have no doubt it expressed the genuine reluctance with which Mr. Gladstone embarked upon the conflict which led to the permanent occupation of Egypt; his one desire was to avoid intervention; or, if it could not be avoided, to restrict its scope within the narrowest possible limits. In dwelling so often on this point,

I have no wish to defend the statesmanship or the foresight of the British policy of this era; all I wish to show is that England is not open to the charge so persistently brought against her by our foreign critics, of having intrigued, of set purpose and forethought, to bring about a state of things which might enable her to obtain a footing in Egypt. The facts speak for themselves. After France had declined to join in the bombardment, she proposed a Conference, and Lord Granville accepted the proposal on the spot. When the Conference, at which all the Great European Powers were represented, assembled at Constantinople on the 23rd of June, Lord Dufferin, acting on instructions he had received from home, induced the Powers to sign a protocol, binding them severally and jointly—

"not to seek in any arrangement which might be made in consequence of the concerted action for the regulation of the affairs of Egypt, any territorial advantage, nor any concession of any exclusive privilege, nor any commercial advantages other than those which any other nation might equally obtain."

In the name of common sense, is it conceivable that a Power which contemplated making itself the master of Egypt, should have tied its own hands beforehand? The obvious explanation of the protocol, as proposed by England, is that Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were anxious to preclude, in as far as they could, the possibility of occupation developing into annexation; and this explanation, though it may

not be creditable to their political insight, is certainly evidence of their reluctance to commit themselves to any action which might lead to a permanent occupation. Again, on the 6th of July, the Conference, with the approval of the British Government, agreed to the signature of an identic note by which the Sultan was invited to send troops to Egypt. The Sultan thereupon consented to join the Conference, and professed his readiness to undertake the restoration of order by Turkish troops. By this time, however, the bombardment had taken place, and when his Majesty was asked by Lord Dufferin to proclaim Arabi a rebel, and to declare Tewfik the lawful Sovereign of Egypt, he declined to make any such declaration. On the 19th of July, when it was known that Arabi's military operations seemed to threaten the safety of the Suez Canal, England joined France in requesting the Conference to determine which of the Powers should be entrusted with the duty of protecting our highway to India. None of the Powers showed any eagerness to undertake the duty in question. Finally, on the 22nd of July, the British Government proposed to France to send a joint expedition "to prevent further loss of life and continuance of anarchy." To this proposal M. de Freycinet replied "that France might be prepared to co-operate with England in protecting the Suez Canal, but could not take part in any expedition into Egypt, outside the Canal." Finally, on the 28th of July, the French Chamber rejected, by an overwhelming majority, the proposal of the Freycinet Ministry to send a force

to Egypt, even for the sole object of protecting the Canal. Believing, as the great majority of Frenchmen did at this period, that Arabi would defeat the Khedive, even if supported by English troops, they were resolved to steer clear of any co-operation with England, and preferred, in the words employed by M. Clémenceau at this period, "to reserve absolute liberty of action to France." It was only after the British Government had declared its intention of sending an armed force to Egypt to uphold the authority of the Khedive, and after France had refused to take part in this expedition, that the Porte consented to issue a proclamation, declaring Arabi to be a rebel against his lawful Sovereign, and agreed to send troops for the restoration of order. Before, however, these tardy resolutions could be carried into effect, Sir Garnet had already arrived at Alexandria, and the war had commenced in earnest.

If I have made my meaning clear, I think it will be obvious that England did everything in her power to avoid armed intervention in Egypt; that when intervention became unavoidable, she tried, wisely or unwisely, to induce Turkey to intervene; that when Turkey declined, she made every effort to persuade France to make a joint intervention in conjunction with herself; and that when France stood aloof, she endeavoured to give an International character to the intervention which she was left to undertake alone at her own risk and cost. Under these circumstances, I fail to see how England, up to this date, can be

fairly accused of having sought to bring about an armed intervention in Egypt for her own profit or aggrandizement, or, still less, with any view to providing herself with a pretext for the permanent occupation of Egypt.

One of the first acts rendered compulsory by the necessities of intervention was the occupation of the Suez Canal. In a country where there are no roads, and where even the dykes are so narrow that there is barely room for one camel to pass another, rivers and canals afford the best, if not the only, means of transporting troops and guns. A mere glance at a map of the Delta will show that the Suez Canal may be a "neutral highway" in time of peace, but that it never can be excluded from the area of military operations, in the event of war. Whatever legal view may be taken by International jurists, the neutrality of the Canal will infallibly be treated as null and void whenever Egypt is involved in war. All that was demanded by the commanders of the British army was the right to use the Canal for the passage of troops, and to occupy certain points on the banks which were necessary for the defence of the Canal. In as far as I can ascertain, the French Government did not dispute the reasonableness of these demands. Nobody out of Bedlam could imagine that the British Government had any intention of injuring the Suez Canal Company, in which it was the largest single shareholder, or had the slightest wish to interfere with an enterprise to which British trade contributed at that period

three-fourths of its whole revenue. The opposition to our using the Canal for the purposes of the campaign was started by M. de Lesseps, who had travelled in haste from Paris to hinder what he considered a violation of the Company's rights and privileges. No doubt the senile vanity of the President, and his lifelong animosity towards England, had a good deal to do with the extravagant manner in which he tried to upset our plan of campaign. But I am convinced the chief cause of his opposition was his utterly mistaken confidence in the success of the mutiny. It was, as I have mentioned, his assurance, that Arabi was sure to win the day, which induced the French Ministry to withdraw the French fleet from Alexandria on the eve of the bombardment. It was only in accordance with this conviction that he should have thought it of vital interest to his Company to keep on good terms with Arabi. He was at this time in communication with the insurgent leaders, begging them to desist from any injury to the Canal, assuring them that he would prevent the English from using it for military purposes; declaring that if England defied his authority, the whole of the civilized world would rise in arms against her, and encouraging the insurgents to resistance by declaring that the sympathies of France were with their cause. The last statement has the exceptional merit of being correct.

TEL-EL-KEBIR

The British fleet enters the Canal—Occupation of Port Said and Ismailia—Battle of Tel-el-Kebir—Rapid advance on Cairo—Termination of the war.

THE story of the campaign may be told briefly. On the 18th of August the fleet sailed from Alexandria with the transports conveying the troops. The enemy had been led to believe that its destination was Aboukir. Probably this belief was confirmed by M. de Lesseps' representations that, owing to his opposition, the British forces would not be allowed to enter the Canal at Port Said. The insurgent army was collected on the shore to oppose the landing at Aboukir, but our fleet sailed past the bay, where Nelson fought and won the battle of the Nile, and made straight for Port Said, where they arrived the following morning. Port Said and Ismailia were seized and occupied without resistance. By the 22nd the bulk of the British forces were landed at Ismailia, the point from which General Wolseley had arranged to advance on Cairo. The chief difficulty of the advance lay in the fact, that for some thirty-seven miles west

of Ismailia the route to Cairo crosses a sandy desert. It was essential, therefore, that the invading force should keep in touch with the sweet-water canal. The railway which runs alongside the Canal was unavailable for transport purposes; and it took a fortnight before the British forces, advancing as they did, by slow stages, owing to the intense heat, had reached the cultivated zone watered by the Nile. As we advanced, the insurgent troops kept on retiring; and it was only when our forces had practically completed the passage of the desert that Arabi could apparently make up his mind to run the risk of actual war. Even then the resistance was half-hearted. After an unsuccessful attack on the British camp at Kassassin, the enemy entrenched themselves at Tel-el-Kebir in a strong position. On the night of the 12th of September the British forces, mustering about 13,000 men and 40 guns, advanced on Tel-el-Kebir, the entrenchments of which were held by 26,000 Egyptian troops and 70 guns. The enemy were attacked at daybreak, and fought fairly well while under cover. But as soon as the British had scaled the parapets of their entrenchments, the insurgents broke and fled, leaving all their guns in the hands of the victors. Arabi was amongst the first to seek safety in flight. Our loss was 52 killed and 380 wounded, the brunt of the battle being borne by the Highlanders. The Egyptian loss was calculated at about 1500.

With Tel-el-Kebir the campaign ended. Arabi caught a train at Belbeys and proceeded to Cairo,

where he had a force of 11,000 troops at his orders, and announced his intention of offering a determined resistance, and of burning down the city sooner than surrender it to the infidels. His plans, whatever they may have been, were upset by the promptitude with which General Wolseley followed up the victory of Tel-el-Kebir. Arabi had reckoned on some days elapsing before the British forces could reach Cairo. But the British cavalry, by a forced march, arrived at the Abassieh quarter of Cairo on the afternoon of the day following the battle. The garrison of 7000 men stationed at the Abassieh camp surrendered unconditionally at once. The garrison of the citadel, which was then, as now, an almost impregnable position, followed suit; and 4000 men laid down their arms. Arabi himself was the first to deprecate any further resistance, and thereby saved his neck from the fate he had so richly merited.

Such, told simply, is the story of the campaign, of which, in my opinion, a good deal more was made in England than its military importance deserved. It was the first time since the Crimean war that a British army had been engaged in a serious war outside its own possessions, and it was only reasonable that our national pride should have been gratified by the completeness and the brilliancy of our victory. There was a natural tendency, on the part of the British press, and to some extent of the British army, to enhance the credit of our success by exaggerating the gallantry of the enemy and the formidable character of the

resistance we had to encounter. This tendency has to some extent prolonged the survival of what may be called the Arabi legend, and has obscured the plain, hard truth, that the so-called Nationalist movement was nothing more nor less than a military mutiny, organized without ability, and conducted without courage.

I need hardly say that if the magnitude of the Tel-el-Kebir campaign was somewhat over-estimated at home, it was still more under-estimated abroad, and especially in France. The French press, who before the campaign were confident that England had embarked in an enterprise where failure was more than probable, suddenly discovered that the campaign was nothing but a military promenade, and that our success, such as it was, had simply been achieved by our having bribed Arabi's colleagues, if not Arabi himself, to betray the cause of Egyptian independence. If our fellow-countrymen were not so sublimely indifferent to foreign criticism, the comments of French journalism on the suppression of the Arabi mutiny might have taught them what to expect whenever England should be engaged in a serious war.

AFTER THE MUTINY

Collapse of the mutiny—Early withdrawal announced of British troops—Lord Dufferin sent to Cairo—Trial of Arabi and his colleagues—Sentence of death vetoed by British Government—Prisoners pleaded guilty, and punishment of death commuted to exile.

WITH the capture of Cairo and the surrender of Arabi, the national uprising collapsed like a balloon that has been pricked. On the day following the British entry into the capital, the regiments stationed at Kafr-Douar laid down their arms. The force at Aboukir followed their example within twenty-four hours. At Damietta, where Abd-el-Al, the only one of Arabi's colleagues who had shown any personal courage, had 7000 men under his command, a slight show of resistance was made. But on the approach of a British force under General Sir Evelyn Wood, Abd-el-Al gave way, and within a week of Tel-el-Kebir the insurrection was at an end. The army had practically disbanded itself; the fellaheen soldiery had thrown off their uniforms and gone back to their farms. The prisons were crowded to overflowing with the officers and officials who had taken any prominent part in the rebellion.

Two days after Tel-el-Kebir, Lord Dufferin, in accordance with the instructions he had received from home, informed the Sultan that, the insurrection in Egypt being now suppressed, her Majesty's Government contemplated the early withdrawal of the British troops. I believe this assurance, however it has been belied by events, was given in perfect good faith. Lord Dufferin, with his great experience of Eastern affairs, probably realized that it was much easier for England to get into Egypt than to get out of it. But this truth was not realized at the time by Mr. Gladstone or by his colleagues, or by the British public. I have little doubt that the Prime Minister seriously imagined it would be possible to follow the example of the Magdala and Coomassie campaigns, and to carry out the withdrawal of the British army from Egypt as soon as the immediate object of our expedition had been accomplished.

No delusion of this kind was entertained in Egypt. The authority of the Khedive had never recovered the blow given to the prestige of his office by the deposition of his father. The army, by whose force order had to be restored and upheld, had proved utterly untrustworthy. The introduction of Turkish troops into Egypt was regarded with dread on the part of Egypt, as being certain to result in the restoration of Turkish rule. The re-establishment of the Dual Control was manifestly futile, unless their rule was supported by an army in whom the Khedive could place confidence. An Anglo-French occupation was

out of the question, after the manner in which France had left England in the lurch. The country was again involved in financial difficulties, which seemed at the time well-nigh insuperable. The composition arranged by the Commission of Liquidation between Egypt and her creditors could not be carried into effect unless her credit were restored, and the restoration of her credit was obviously impossible if the British troops were withdrawn before some other military force had been provided for the maintenance of law and order. It followed, therefore, that England had either to retain an army of occupation in Egypt, or to leave the country to relapse into a condition of anarchy, which would necessitate a foreign occupation by some one of the Continental Powers. Under these conditions, we had practically no course open to us but to occupy Egypt ourselves, till such time as the Egyptian Government might be able to stand alone without foreign support. The duration of this temporary occupation could obviously not be determined beforehand. But I feel convinced that, at this period, not only Mr. Gladstone, but the great majority of our public men, honestly believed that our occupation was not likely to prove of any great length. However this may be, an agreement was concluded on the 25th of September —the day after Tewfik had re-entered Cairo in state, accompanied by the Duke of Connaught, Sir General Wolseley, and Sir Edward Malet—in virtue of which Great Britain consented to reduce her force in Egypt to 12,000 men, and to bear the whole expenses of the

campaign up to date; while the Egyptian Government agreed in future to pay the additional expenses likely to be caused to England by her military occupation of Egypt, these expenses being calculated as, in round numbers, £4 a month per soldier. The agreement also contained an expression of England's desire to withdraw her troops as soon as possible, and in any case to reduce their numbers as rapidly as circumstances could allow.

No great intelligence is required to prove that what has already happened was logically bound to happen; and I do not think our civil and military authorities in Egypt can be justly blamed for not having foreseen the consequences of a decision they were called upon to take almost immediately after the suppression of the Arabi mutiny. If our occupation was to be temporary, we must obviously allow Egypt to be governed in the near future by a native administration, in accordance with Oriental ideas and customs. If, on the other hand, we felt it our duty to govern the country during our occupation by English officials, acting upon English ideas of right and justice, our occupation must of necessity be prolonged, if not permanent. It is the nature of Englishmen to decide any question submitted to their judgment upon its individual merits, without much regard to the ulterior consequences which their decision may entail. The particular question which the English authorities were called upon to decide, after the suppression of the mutiny, was the punishment to be inflicted on

the authors of a defeated rebellion. In the East there was only one possible answer to such a question. The mutiny, initiated and organized by Arabi and his associates, was a distinct violation of their military duty, as well as an act of treason towards their Sovereign. The mutineers had tried, and failed; and by the laws of the Ottoman Empire, the only punishment for such a crime is death. What is more important than the letter of the law, public opinion in the East endorsed the enforcement of the legal penalty. If Arabi had succeeded, no Oriental would have blamed him if he had deposed the Khedive and sentenced him to death. As Arabi had failed, even his own partisans held that he had got to suffer for his failure. This was undoubtedly the opinion of the Khedive and his Ministers.

Tewfik Pasha was an amiable, kindly-natured man in ordinary life. But still he was an Oriental Prince, imbued with Oriental ideas, the ruler of a people to whom these ideas commended themselves strongly. Knowing him, as I did well in after years, I cannot doubt that if he had been left a free hand, he would have punished the men, who had risen in revolt against his authority, with stern and prompt severity. No consideration of any encouragement, he might have given them under compulsion, would have stayed his hand. Not one of the men who had conspired for his deposition, if not for his death, would have been left alive to tell the tale. For the leading officers who had mutinied, there could,

in his opinion, be no penalty short of death. For the others, exile and confiscation might possibly have been deemed adequate punishment. After all, Tewfik was the son of Ismail, the grandson of Mahomet Ali. If he had been allowed to punish the rebels after the wont and usage of the East, he might have inspired a respect and terror amongst his own subjects which would have restored his sorely damaged authority; but if he was not allowed to punish, he was not fit to rule. Such, at any rate, was the verdict of his people; and from that verdict, as might have been known to those who stepped in to protect Arabi and his fellow-conspirators from the just reward of their crimes, there was no appeal.

Yet it would be unreasonable to ignore the considerations which led the representatives of the British Government in Egypt to come to an opposite conclusion. If, after the mutiny had been suppressed by British troops, the punishment of the rebels had been left in the hands of the native authorities, the British Government would have been held responsible for the indiscriminate slaughter, the disregard for the strict rules of evidence, the indifference to human suffering, the utter carelessness as to whether the innocent may not suffer with the guilty, which are wont to characterize all Oriental measures of suppression. In England, even more than in other European countries, there would have been an outburst of indignation, if Achmed the Egyptian and his followers had been handed over to the mercy of the Khedive and his

Ministers. The whole of the European population of Egypt, with scarcely an exception, were of opinion that, in the interest of public order, an example must be made of Arabi and the other ringleaders. But the British public had come to an opposite conclusion, and, under Parliamentary government, the opinion of the public is a thing no Ministry can afford to resist. Moreover, from my own point of view, as an advocate of the British occupation, I hold that in this matter the Ministry were in the right. Where I blame them is that they failed to realize that if they interfered to save the mutineers from punishment, they destroyed any possibility of re-establishing the authority of the native Government, and thereby committed England to the task of taking the administration of Egypt into her own hands.

The Khedive was therefore informed that no steps must be taken as to the trial and punishment of the conspirators previous to the arrival of Lord Dufferin, who was about to pay a visit to Egypt on a special mission "to advise the Government of the Khedive in the arrangements which would have to be made for re-establishing his Highness's authority." I should fancy our then Ambassador at Constantinople, with his great knowledge of the East, and his keen sense of humour, must have smiled to himself when he read these instructions, knowing, as he did, that the result of the advice he was instructed to tender would be to deprive the Khedive of his last chance of re-establishing his authority. The first act of our Envoy was to

advise the release of the mass of the prisoners confined in the State prisons on charges connected with the mutiny. Prisons in Egypt were very different in those days from what they have become under British control; and I have no doubt that the prisoners taken after the collapse of the mutiny were under-fed, ill-treated, confined in over-crowded cells, and that the muster roll included many innocent persons, and many more against whom there was no evidence which would have justified their conviction before an English court. In obedience to Lord Dufferin's advice—and, under the circumstances, to advise was to order—the great bulk of the prisoners were let go, and a general amnesty was proclaimed for all officers up to the rank of captain. Special Commissioners were appointed to try the leaders of the mutiny.

The British Government, after having authorized the trial of Arabi and his fellow-conspirators, stipulated beforehand that in the event of any of the accused being found guilty and sentenced to death, the sentence should not be carried out without the approval of the British authorities. Arabi's English friends provided him with English counsel. By the Ottoman military code, which governs the procedure of court-martials in Egypt, a prisoner is not allowed to be defended by counsel, or to have communication in private with his counsel before his trial. The British Consul-General, however, insisted, in the interest of Arabi, that the law should be set aside in his case, and that Mr. Mark Napier, Q.C., and

Mr. Broadley, two barristers sent out from England, by private subscription, for the defence of Arabi, should have full access to their client, and should conduct his case in court. Moreover, the British Government further insisted that Sir Charles Wilson, who, in later years, played a conspicuous part in the abortive campaign for the rescue of General Gordon, should be present at the trial, as a sort of *amicus curiæ*, to see that justice was done as between the court and the prisoners. A far less quick-witted people than the Egyptians would, from these facts, have come to the conclusion that the British Government did not desire the conviction of the mutineers; and the moment the existence of this desire was realized, the virtual acquittal of the prisoners became a foregone conclusion. Mr. Broadley, as a man of less legal repute than Mr. Napier, was willing to take a line of defence which his leader might have hesitated in employing. Even in an English court of law a counsel would hardly have been allowed to defend Arabi on the ground that the Khedive and the Sultan were indirectly responsible for the outrages committed during the mutiny, and that the mutiny was in reality a patriotic movement.

The prisoners, five in number—Arabi, Toulba, Mahmoud Sami, Mahmoud Fehmi, and Ali Fehmi,—were charged in the indictment "with having excited the Egyptians to arm against the Government of the Khedive, with having incited the people to civil war, and with having committed acts of destruction

and pillage on Egyptian territory." These offences, if brought home, were punishable by death. Even in the most civilized of countries, an attempt to induce an army to rise in mutiny is followed, if the attempt proves a failure, by the severest punishment known to the law. The British barristers, however, pleaded to the bewildered court that there was no satisfactory legal evidence of Arabi and his colleagues having been actually cognizant of the crimes committed in their names and in their interest. The chief witness against Arabi was a certain Suleiman Sami, who was in command of the regiment which set fire to the buildings in the square of Mahomet Ali at Alexandria, and who swore that he had done so by the orders of Arabi. Sir Charles Wilson, however, reported to Lord Dufferin that Suleiman Sami's evidence was not given in a satisfactory manner, and that the specific charges against Arabi had broken down. The Khedive was advised to change the sentence of death into one of exile, on condition of the prisoners pleading guilty to the charge of rebellion. Arabi was advised to accept the compromise as the best that his friends could possibly hope to obtain; and in both cases the advice was taken. Arabi pleaded guilty. Sentence of death was announced; and a letter was then read from the Khedive, commuting the penalty of death to one of exile from Egypt to some British possession to be designated by the British Government. Arabi's colleagues were in like manner found guilty on the

following day, on their own confessions, sentenced, and reprieved; and on the 26th of December, 1882, the exiles were embarked at Suez and transported by a vessel sailing under the British flag to Ceylon, where they lived in comfort, at the cost of the Egyptian Treasury, for over eighteen years, until, last year, they were wisely, or unwisely, allowed to return to Egypt, in deference to the advice of the British authorities.

After the collapse of the State trial at Cairo, it was idle to entertain the idea of capital punishment being inflicted on any of the minor offenders. A few of the more prominent conspirators were exiled to the outlying provinces or set free on their undertaking to reside in future in their own homes. In accordance with the topsy-turvydom which prevails in all Egyptian affairs, the only man who suffered a criminal's death for his participation in the mutiny was the unfortunate Suleiman Sami, who was hung at Alexandria, six months after Arabi's departure for Ceylon. He richly deserved his fate, but that he should have been hung while Arabi was living in luxury as a State pensioner and a distinguished exile, could only have occurred in the land of Pharaoh and Joseph. As I have said already, I fail to see how any British Government, occupying an Oriental country with British troops, could have allowed the native Government of the country to deal out the wholesale, indiscriminate, brutal punishment upon the authors of a defeated mutiny, which

would have been regarded, not only by their fellow-countrymen, but by themselves, as a fate justly merited. But when the British authorities in Egypt decided that the Khedive could not be permitted to punish officers who had mutinied against himself and his dynasty, they dealt a blow to the Khedivial authority, which it has never recovered. Riaz Pasha, who had been appointed Prime Minister by the Khedive after the abdication of Ismail Pasha, and had been reinstated in power upon the collapse of the Arabi rebellion, felt so strongly about the impolicy and injustice of letting the leaders of the mutiny escape virtually without punishment, that he resigned on learning that he was called upon to sanction the reprieve by which Arabi and his colleagues were remitted the penalty of death. It may be well to say something here of the statesman who, after Nubar, *longo intervallo*, played a leading part in Egyptian politics.

Riaz Pasha's career is characteristic of the Oriental side of Egyptian life. He begun life in very humble circumstances. Indeed, according to common report, he had been first known as a dancing boy, a report which may have derived some support from the fact that he must always have been very short in stature and spare of figure. Be this as it may, Riaz was one of the many Egyptians who, in the old days, rose to high eminence by his own personal ability, aided, no doubt, by the favour of the Court. In his case, as in that of the Mufettish, he was the architect of his

own fortunes. The difference between the two men was that the latter owed his success to unworthy means, while the former owed it to an industry and energy, very rare amongst native officials. By hard work, frugal living, and independence of character, he made his way to the front in the public service. Probably, from his Jewish ancestors, he possessed a certain faculty of organization and a dislike to disorder and wastefulness, which made him more of a man of mark in his own country than he would have been in Europe. In creed, he was a devout, almost a fanatical, Mussulman. On my visits to him, I hardly ever saw him without the rosary in his hands, by passing whose beads through his fingers a follower of the Prophet numbers the prayers he has to repeat daily in honour of Allah. In politics, he was a strong Conservative, averse to change of any kind, and a staunch partisan of personal rule. Still, both his religious and political proclivities were kept in bounds by shrewd, common sense, and by a faculty of seeing things as they are. He was at heart opposed to British intervention. But he realized that the British occupation was a necessity for the time being, and he was therefore prepared to act in accordance with any instructions given him by the British authorities, though not up to the point of pardoning Arabi for a crime which, in the East, at any rate, was universally regarded as rank treason and mutiny.

THE RISING OF THE MAHDI

Insurrection in the Soudan—Abolition of slavery in Egypt by Khedivial decree in 1881—Mahdi rising at Keneh.

THE Arabi mutiny had hardly collapsed before the attention of the Egyptian Government was called to a far more serious insurrection which was rapidly gaining ground in a remote part of the kingdom. At the end of July, 1881, the Khedive, at the urgent instance of the British Government, issued a decree, nominally abolishing slavery throughout the territories of Egypt. I use the word nominally, because, so long as an Oriental country remains under native administration, domestic slavery, in one form or another, is a necessity of Oriental life. As a matter of theory, all slaves in Egypt could, under the law of 1881, get themselves set free whenever they pleased. They had only to present themselves at the State Bureau, and there they obtained, free of charge, a paper, emancipating them from any obligation towards their former masters or mistresses. But in practice, comparatively few slaves availed themselves of the

privilege. I suspect the Khedive and his Ministers knew beforehand that the decree was of the nature of a pious aspiration, and that their consent to its issue was dictated by the same wish to conciliate British public opinion as had led Ismail Pasha to send Gordon to the Soudan with instructions to suppress the slave trade. Gordon, as I have already mentioned, had carried out his orders with an almost superhuman energy, and though he had not stamped out the slave trade, he had inflicted punishments on the Soudanese slave-traders — or, in other words, on all the leading chiefs of the country—which they were never likely to forget, or, still less, forgive. When, therefore, they learnt that the new Khedive had abolished slavery within his dominions, they regarded the intelligence as a warning that a fresh attack was to be made upon the trade, by which they not only earned their livelihood, but maintained their position as a ruling caste.

The Soudanese were thus ripe, now that Gordon was gone, for insurrection ; and it is a curious coincidence that the issue of the decree, declaring the sale or purchase of slaves a penal offence in Egypt, should have been followed by the appearance of a Mahdi in the Soudan. In Mahometan countries such appearances are matters of common occurrence. All throughout Islam there is a belief, borrowed probably from Judaism, that sooner or later a Messiah, or Mahdi, will make his advent on earth to lead the followers of the Prophet to victory over the infidel.

From time to time, men, renowned in their own localities for their knowledge of the sacred law, and their strict obedience to its rules and precepts, go about exhorting their neighbours to revert to the true faith in Allah, as propounded by his Prophet, to eschew all association with unbelievers, to have no fellowship with Mahometans who smoke or drink the wine that is red, and to refuse obedience to any other law than that of the Koran. Such men either claim to be Mahdis, or are credited with being Mahdis by their adherents. Some are fanatics, others are impostors; the great majority are a compound of both characters. Under a wise native Government, they are allowed to pray and preach and exhort with impunity, so long as they confine themselves to denouncing any falling off from Islam; but the moment they try to carry theory into practise, and refuse to obey the orders of the ruling power, they are crushed out of existence.

Some dozen years or so before the period of which I write, there appeared, under the reign of Ismail, a Mahdi in a village not far from the banks of the Nile, in the neighbourhood of Keneh. The Mahdi in question was a holy man, who gained many followers by his exhortations. In an evil hour for himself and his neighbours, he encouraged his adherents to refuse to pay taxes to a ruler who, as he alleged, consorted with Christians, and was himself no better than an unbeliever. The advice was followed; and the next time the tax collectors appeared in the Mahdi's village,

they were driven away with stones, and returned penniless. As soon as the news of this rising reached Cairo, a regiment was sent to surround the village, with orders to allow nobody to pass their lines, to shoot down every living thing, man, woman, child, and animal, and to sow the lands of the villages with salt, so that they might remain barren for ever, as a warning to future generations. The orders were, it is said, carried out to the letter. Nothing more was ever heard in this neighbourhood of any open resistance to the authority of the Government; and the insurrection died stillborn.

However contrary to European ideas this stamping out of the Keneh Mahdi may appear to us, it is certain that, if a similar process could have been resorted to in the case of the Mahdi of the Soudan, Mahomet Achmed of Dongola, humanity would have been the gainer. A man of humble origin, a carpenter by trade, he gradually got into relations with the Fakirs, or holy men of the Soudan, studied the Koran at Fakir schools, was admitted into the order of Fakirs, and finally acquired great local repute by dwelling in a cave, where he used to spend hours calling upon Allah by his hundred attributes, and by exhorting all who came within his reach to revert to the sacred law contained in the Koran. Later on he proclaimed that he himself was the Mahdi chosen by Allah to reform and restore Islam, and soon obtained a considerable following. He took up his quarters on an island in the White Nile, not far from Fashoda,

and began to enter into communications with the Dervishes, who, as I have explained, were bitterly disaffected towards the Egyptian Government as being hostile to their interests as slave-traders. Raouf Pasha, who had succeeded Gordon as Governor-General of the Soudan, summoned the Mahdi to Khartoum, and, on his refusing to do so, sent several expeditions to effect his capture. All these expeditions were defeated, and the Mahdi's repute spread far and wide. Probably, if Egypt had been in a position to send a large force to Khartoum, the rising might have been crushed before it had assumed formidable proportions. The Khedive, however, at this period, was in far too critical a position to pay much attention to the affairs of the Soudan, while Arabi had every motive not to send troops to a remote distance. Indeed, there is strong reason to believe that he sympathized with the insurrection in the Soudan, if he did not actually enter into relations with the Mahdi. After all, the Mahdi was fighting in the same cause as he was himself, and he had no reason, but the contrary, to desire his defeat.

During the period which ended in the deposition of Arabi, the Egyptian Government in the Soudan failed to do more than hold its ground. A number of engagements were fought between the Dervishes, led by the Mahdi, and the Egyptian troops, commanded by Giegler Pasha, a German who had entered the Khedivial service. In as far as can be

gathered about a campaign conducted without any reports of its progress beyond the meagre accounts published in the Cairo papers, the Egyptian troops—under-fed, ill-paid, and badly officered—had no heart in the warfare, and, even when they had obtained a victory, were unable or unwilling to follow it up. The net result was, that at the end of October, 1882, Abd-el-Kader, who had replaced Raouf Pasha in the Governorship of the Soudan, wrote to Cairo to the effect that, unless an army of 15,000 men was despatched to his support, he would be compelled to evacuate Khartoum and retire from the Soudan. In response to this demand, it was determined that, as soon as the condition of internal affairs rendered it possible for the Government to reconstitute the army, a force of the amount requested should be sent to the Soudan to suppress the Dervish insurrection for once and for all. Before this army was organized, the Khedive requested the assistance of the British Government, whose troops were then occupying Egypt. The request, however, was refused peremptorily, on the ground that England's interest in Egypt did not extend to the Soudan. To say the truth, the British Government at this period were so anxious to dissociate themselves from any permanent responsibility in respect of Egypt, that, though they were advised by their representatives at Cairo that the proposed expedition was certain to end in failure, they could not make up their minds to prohibit its despatch, lest, by so doing, they might appear to recognize any

liability on their part to assist Egypt in suppressing the Soudanese insurrection.

Upon this refusal being received, the Khedivial Government began to collect troops at the Barrage. Early in 1883, an army of 10,000 men left Lower Egypt for the Soudan, under the command of Hicks Pasha, an English officer, who had acquired a considerable reputation in India. Many of the soldiers who had deserted after Tel-el-Kebir were brought back in chains. The officers were all more or less disaffected; and the leniency with which the Arabi mutiny had been punished had completely destroyed the sense of military duty. When Colonel Hicks, accompanied by a number of British officers, assumed command of the expedition in the Soudan, he restored a certain semblance of discipline and order. His first military operations were successful, and on the news of these successes being received in Cairo, Colonel Hicks was ordered to march with his army upon Kordofan. Further reinforcements, though of a most unsatisfactory character, were sent from Cairo, and on the 9th of September, 1883, the Egyptian army set forth from Omdurman on its march.

From this date, the whole story of the advance is surrounded with confusion. The first hundred miles from Omdurman were accomplished without difficulty. There remained a track of desert, of about the same distance, to be traversed before the invading force could rely on finding water. Hicks Pasha received information from his Egyptian colleague in the

command of the expedition that water was forthcoming halfway across the desert. On the strength of this information, whether given in ignorance or with intent to deceive, Hicks, much against his own judgment, proceeded on his perilous march.

Sometime early in November, the final disaster arrived. There had been dissensions, so the rumour went, between the English and the Egyptian officers. The friendly tribes, whose services the Egyptian general, Al-ed-Din Pasha, had secured, or professed to have secured, went over to the enemy on the appearance of the Mahdi's army, and turned their arms against their comrades; so, at least, it was reported. But all these reports are utterly unreliable. All that can be asserted with any certainty is that Hicks and his army of 10,000, with all its officers, guns, and ammunition, disappeared as completely as if they had been swallowed up by an earthquake. From that day to this the true story of the Hicks disaster has never been known. In order to show how utterly the whole affair was buried in obscurity, I may state that two years later, on one of my many visits to Cairo, I received one day a message from Nubar, who was then Prime Minister, to the effect that apparently trustworthy intelligence had arrived from the Soudan, stating that half of Hicks's army, some 5000 men, had succeeded in making good their escape, and had entrenched themselves on an island in the White Nile, where they could obtain full supplies of food and water, and where they were safe against

any possible attack. I went to see the Khedive on the subject, and was assured by him that the news bore every appearance of being authentic. But from that day to this, some sixteen years ago, not a trace has ever been discovered of the troops who were reported to have escaped the massacre of their comrades, and to have remained faithful to the flag.

LORD DUFFERIN'S REPORT

Mr. Gladstone's Government reaffirms its intention of an early withdrawal from Egypt—Lord Dufferin instructed to draw up a report on the future administration of Egypt—General character of this report—Recommends abolition of Dual Control and reorganization of Egyptian army under British officers—Valentine Pasha appointed Sirdar by the Khedive—Appointment cancelled by orders of the British Government Loss of golden opportunity for abolishing International Boards throughout Egypt.

I HAVE thought it well to carry this narrative of the Mahdi's insurrection to its crowning triumph in the annihilation of Colonel Hicks's army, as, unless the gravity of these events is fully appreciated, it is impossible to understand the effect they produced upon the relations between England and Egypt.

By the end of 1882, the Arabi insurrection had been wiped out of existence, and order had been restored in Egypt by the presence of the British army of occupation. The year 1883, however, was not a week old before the British Government renewed its assurances that the occupation was only of a temporary and provisional character. Lord

Granville issued a circular note to the Great Powers, informing them that—

"although for the present a British force remained in Egypt for the preservation of public tranquillity, the British Government wished to withdraw its troops, as soon as a system capable of protecting the authority of the Khedive should be organized."

To suppose this declaration was issued with the object of hoodwinking the Powers to whom it was addressed, is not only inconsistent with the traditions of British diplomacy, but involves utter ignorance of the character of the Administration by whom the circular was issued. It is not difficult, I think, to trace the hand of Mr. Gladstone in its wording. His dislike to any permanent occupation of Egypt by England had undergone no modification since, some few years before, he, being then out of office, had gone out of his way to write an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, denouncing any idea of annexing the territory which forms our highway to India. Recent events had shown him that the withdrawal of our troops, which he had supposed would follow immediately upon the suppression of the military mutiny, was a practical impossibility. But though he recognized this truth, he was resolved to do everything in his power to bar the possibility of our temporary occupation developing into one of a permanent character. From his point of view, he was undoubtedly in the right. Whether that point

of view has proved conducive to the interests of England is, of course, another question.

In pursuance of the assumption that our occupation was to be of brief duration, Lord Dufferin was requested to remain in Egypt, after the trial and deportation of Arabi, in order to advise the Khedive as to the reforms required to place Egypt in such a position of stable security as to allow her to dispense with the presence of the army of occupation. To put the matter plainly, his Lordship held for some months, after the mutiny had been put down, a position analogous to that of a British Resident in a native Indian State under British protection. For the time being his advice was tantamount to a command; his word was law. In the remarkable report in which Lord Dufferin recorded the results of his mission, there occurs a passage which seems to my mind to suggest that if he had had a free hand, he would have recommended this temporary arrangement being made permanent. The passage referred to is this—

"Had I been commissioned to place affairs in Egypt on the footing of an Indian subject State, the outlook would have been different. The masterful hand of a Resident would have quickly bent everything to his will, and in the space of five years we should have greatly added to the national wealth and well-being of the country by the extension of its cultivated area and the consequent expansion of its revenue; by the partial, if not total, abolition of the corvée and slavery; the establishment of justice and other beneficent reforms. . . . Her Majesty's Government and the public opinion in England have pronounced against such an alternative."

Lord Dufferin's hands, however, being tied, he came—if I read his report aright—to the conclusion that, on the assumption of our occupation being solely of a provisional character, he had to carry out such reforms as were required to facilitate the departure of our troops; and to suggest a series of measures which —if they could be set on foot previous to the withdrawal of our army, and if they could survive its withdrawal—might conceivably enable the native Government to maintain law and order at home, while it would still remain protected from foreign intervention by the power of England. I should doubt greatly whether the author of this scheme had any personal confidence in its feasibility. I am convinced that in Egypt no such belief existed. Still, under the conditions of the case, the scheme was about the most plausible that could be suggested. At any rate, it satisfied public opinion in England, and enabled the Ministry to adhere to their persistent contention that, within a short time, the condition of Egypt would be such as to justify the withdrawal of the British troops. In justice to Lord Dufferin, it should always be remembered that, at the time when the report was issued, the Soudan insurrection was far from having assumed the importance it developed after his return to the Embassy at Constantinople.

With regard to the action taken by Lord Dufferin, as a *de facto* Resident, there can be nothing but praise. His first official act was to advise the Khedive to abolish the Dual Control, and to substitute for it a

single European financial adviser, it being understood that this adviser should be an Englishman, recommended by the British Government. This advice was of course adopted. The Dual Control was abolished by a decree of the Khedive, and Mr. Auckland Colvin was appointed to be his Highness's financial counsellor. Again, Lord Dufferin rendered a signal service to England and Egypt by opposing a view which had found favour with the Liberal party at home, and which was said to number some adherents within the Cabinet, that an army was a luxury which Egypt did not require, and could not afford. The absurdity of this theory is patent to any one acquainted with the geographical conditions of the country. Egypt is, in fact, a vast oasis, surrounded on every side, except its northern sea-coast frontier, by the desert, and occupied by an agricultural population of a singularly unwarlike and unadventurous disposition. The desert, however, is not a barren solitude, but a space dotted over with any number of small oases, inhabited by Bedouin tribes, who from time immemorial have raided the peaceful and fertile lands of Egypt, whenever the country was not protected by a strong Government, supported by a powerful army. A great deal of false sentiment has been uttered about the Bedouin Arabs. They are, physically and morally, a superior race to the fellaheen, who, I suspect, were originally Copts, converted to Islam after the Mahometan conquest of Egypt. I can easily understand that Englishmen, familiar with desert life, such as my friend, the late

Sir Richard Burton, should be enthusiastic about the merits of the Bedouins. But I am convinced he would have been the first to admit that, as neighbours, they were utterly untrustworthy and unscrupulous.

A signal illustration of Bedouin character had just been furnished by the murder of Professor Palmer and his companions. The professor was a distinguished Arabic scholar, who had travelled much in the Sinai desert, who had formed friendships with the leading Bedouin chiefs, and who, in common with all European travellers in the desert, enormously overestimated his personal influence with these wild tribesmen. He had volunteered, on the eve of the Tel-el-Kebir campaign, to secure the support of a number of important Bedouin tribes located east of the Suez Canal, and had been provided for this purpose with a large sum of gold coin by the British Government. He was, or believed himself to be, the bosom friend of the Bedouins. But as soon as they learnt that he was in possession of many bags of gold, they robbed him and his English companions, and murdered them under circumstances of peculiar atrocity. On the morrow of this occurrence, which was not even known in Cairo till after the suppression of the mutiny, and in the face of the Dervish insurrection in the Soudan, it was impossible to contend that Egypt could remain in safety, unless she had a permanent army sufficiently strong to repel any raid against her open and defenceless frontiers.

If the British troops were to be withdrawn at the

earliest period possible, it followed, logically, that there must be a native army in Egypt possessing the power to maintain order at home, and to protect the country from any attacks on the part of the semi-savage fanatical tribes which roam about the desert regions lying east and west of the Nile valley. The experience of the past had shown that an Egyptian army, commanded by Egyptian officers, was a source of danger to the State. Lord Dufferin, therefore, advised the Khedive to place the native Egyptian army under the orders of an English commander, supported in the higher ranks by a staff of English officers, who were, in military phrase, "seconded" by the British War Office. As a matter of necessity, the Khedive accepted this advice, and proceeded to offer the Commandership-in-chief to Colonel Valentine Baker, who, by reason of his great professional repute, and of the gallant service he had rendered to Turkey, in the war with Russia, was an extremely popular personage in every Mahometan community. After the offer had been accepted and the appointment announced, the British Government suddenly discovered that "the Nonconformist conscience" disapproved of an officer with Valentine Baker's antecedents holding a position of authority in a country where British influence was paramount. In deference to popular sentiment at home, the Khedive was advised to cancel Baker's nomination, and select Sir Evelyn Wood in his place. The advice was accepted with great reluctance; and,

in order to render its acceptance less galling, his Highness was allowed to appoint Colonel Baker head of the police. Of all the anomalies encountered by the student of Anglo-Egyptian history, the one for which I have found it most difficult to suggest a possible explanation is, why—especially considering the nature of the offence which had wrecked his career—Valentine Baker should have been held by the British public to be unfit to be the head of the Egyptian army, but to be fit to be the head of the Egyptian police. I must leave it to others to solve what seems to me an insoluble problem, and pass on. I fail to see how the military necessities of Egypt could have been better provided for than they were by Lord Dufferin's scheme for the reorganization of the Egyptian army under British officers. The only objection to the scheme is that an army so constituted can never be a good training-school for developing any military ability the native officers may by chance possess. In other words, an army officered by foreigners may be a very efficient military force, but can never be a national army. Yet the possession of a national army, supposing such a thing to be possible, is an essential condition of Egypt being ever in a position to resume her independent existence.

Nevertheless, if one makes allowance for the limitations under which Lord Dufferin had to exercise his functions, no criticism on what he accomplished can be otherwise than favourable. Criticism on what he failed to accomplish would be easy enough, if it were

not for the knowledge that his hands were tied. Yet it is impossible for any one, who understands the manifold difficulties created by our anomalous position in Egypt, not to regret the loss of the golden opportunity of simplifying our position there, which was deliberately thrown away at the time of the Dufferin mission. The readiness with which France acquiesced, after a formal protest, in the abolition of the Dual Control, and the transfer of its authority to the hands of an English official, showed clearly that at this period the Continental Powers were not prepared to offer active resistance to any modifications our Government might have thought it right to make in the relations between Egypt and other Powers. Yet, having the cards in our own hands, we deliberately declined to win the game. We left the whole fabric of International administration in Egypt undisturbed. The railways are still administered by an International Board. So are the Daira Sanieh and Domain lands. The receipts of the revenues affected to the service of the Public Debt, are still paid over to an International Commission, which, in its capacity of holder of the purse-strings, restricts and regulates the general policy of the country. Justice is still administered by International courts, in which the use of the English language is not allowed in legal proceedings. Yet I have reason to know that the suppression of the International courts and their replacement by British courts was regarded by the members of these tribunals as a foregone conclusion after the

Arabi mutiny had been put down by British troops. In all criminal matters the Capitulations still hold good; and at every step the reforms introduced by the British officials in the Egyptian service are hampered and retarded by the International Boards, which exercise a jurisdiction in their several departments quite independent of, and in most instances hostile to, the interests alike of England and of Egypt. All these inconveniences we have to put up with because Lord Dufferin was not allowed to contemplate the contingency of our occupation becoming permanent, and was obliged to make out a case which, while it not only justified the postponement of any immediate withdrawal of the British troops, gave no encouragement to the idea that the postponement involved any change of policy on the part of his Majesty's Ministry, or any modification of their resolve to terminate our military occupation at the earliest date possible. The Abbé de Sieyes never devised a more ingenious constitution than that which Lord Dufferin suggested in his report, as affording guarantees of security and order, which, when firmly established, would enable the British troops to be withdrawn from Egypt without imperilling the safety of the State. The Khedive, in as far as can be made out, was to remain the embodiment of personal government. But his power, as an arbitrary autocrat, was to be kept within due bounds by the moral influence of an enlightened Ministry, a wisely selected Legislative Council, and a representative Chamber of Notables. Nothing of course

ever came of the constitutional programme beyond its formal enactment by a Khedivial decree, but it served its purpose of furnishing the British Government with a brief, on the strength of which they could reconcile the continuance of the occupation with their avowed purpose of bringing it to a close at no distant period. Even before the appearance of the Dufferin report, the Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament contained a statement that "order is now re-established in Egypt, and the British troops will be withdrawn as promptly as may be permitted by a prudent examination of the country." In May, Lord Dufferin quitted Egypt, and in the course of the same month Sir Evelyn Baring returned to Egypt on his appointment as Consul-General and Minister Plenipotentiary.

THE EVACUATION OF THE SOUDAN

Sir Evelyn Baring becomes our Consul-General — His exceptional qualifications for post—On news of Hicks's defeat England insists on evacuation of the Soudan by Egypt—Ismail Pasha's views on evacuation—General indignation in Egypt—Cherif Pasha resigns and is succeeded by Nubar Pasha, who consents to carry out policy of evacuation—Egyptian troops sent under Baker Pasha to rescue garrisons in Eastern Soudan—Defeat and rout of El Teb—Sinkat and Tokar captured by the Dervishes.

THE choice of Sir Evelyn Baring to fill the post previously occupied by Sir Edward Malet was singularly happy. He was a man of the world, who, while still comparatively young, had occupied positions of high responsibility, had seen much of many countries, and had had considerable experience in dealing with Oriental races. I have never thought diplomacy, in our Western sense of the word, to be of much value in Eastern lands. If it comes to a question of finesse or intrigue, the Oriental can always outmanœuvre the European, even if he is a Russian. The way to deal with Turks is laid down in a letter from Lord Palmerston to his brother, Sir Henry Bulwer, our then Ambassador at Constantinople, to the following effect:—

"Never argue with the Turk. Tell him what you want him to do, and that he has got to do it. In this

way you will get what you want done; and if your demand is just, the Turk will in the end respect you for having made it."

The moral of this advice Sir Evelyn Baring has taken to heart in all his long and successful career in Egypt. I have often heard him criticized for an absence of that suavity of manner, which is supposed to be one of the special accomplishments of diplomats; but I am convinced that the sometimes almost brutal frankness with which he was wont to express his views and to give advice, between which and an order there was a distinction without a difference, did more than the subtlest diplomacy could have effected to render his position in Egypt similar to that of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in Turkey. I am not sure whether he would have been equally successful in a country where his authority had been less restricted. His strong common sense enabled him to realize the truth, which so many of our Anglo-Indian officials who have taken service in Egypt seem apt to overlook, that, after all, Egypt is not India, and that the British official has not got behind him in the former country the same immediate support of an all-powerful Government as he has in the latter. Our Consul-General is only *primus inter pares* as compared with the representatives of the other Great Powers at Cairo. He has to carry out his policy by the instrumentality of a native Administration, which at heart is indifferent, if not hostile to, the ideas on which that policy is based. To effect his end, he

has to study the jealousies and susceptibilities of foreign nations, who possess a number of what may be called political strongholds in the form of International Boards, Councils, and Commissions. He has, it is true, in case of need, the army of occupation at his back. But, for obvious reasons, the power thus afforded of disarming opposition, native or foreign, can only be employed in cases of the gravest emergency. The nature of the obstacles the present representative of Great Britain at the Khedivial Court has been called upon to confront will be made manifest in the course of my narrative. But I have thought it just, in recording the commencement of his long career as H.B.M. Minister Plenipotentiary in Egypt, to record how greatly, in my opinion, our country is indebted to the courage, ability, and judgment displayed by Lord Cromer.

The news of the destruction of Hicks's army did not reach Cairo till the 22nd of November, 1884. Though, of course, there was anxiety at the prolonged absence of tidings, the utter annihilation of the Egyptian force was a contingency not even contemplated. So late as the 3rd of October, the Egyptian Ministry, under Cherif Pasha, had come to an agreement with the British authorities to the effect that the army of occupation should be reduced to three thousand, and should be removed from Cairo and stationed at Alexandria during the remainder of their sojourn in Egypt. Nine days later, at the Guildhall

banquet, Lord Derby, speaking on behalf of her Majesty's Ministers, stated their belief that, by the following New Year's day, there would not be a single British soldier left in Cairo. Shortly after the Convention had been concluded, rumours reached the Cairo bazaars of some terrible disaster having befallen the Khedive's forces in the Soudan. Finally the news arrived that Hicks and his army had been massacred, and that Khartoum and all the Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan lay at the mercy of the Mahdi. The news fell like a bombshell, not only on the Khedivial Court, but on the Egyptian public. Appeals were made to the British Government to send troops to the Soudan, in order to retrieve the defeat of the Egyptian army, and to uphold the authority of the Khedive at Khartoum. These appeals met with no response, and were followed by a distinct intimation that Egypt must relinquish all idea of retaining the Soudan, and must withdraw her garrisons as soon as possible. This intimation, which was formally conveyed by our Consul-General to the Egyptian Ministry, created absolute consternation. Public opinion, in our sense of the word, can hardly be said to exist in Egypt. The nearest approach to such a thing I have ever noted was the almost unanimous outcry on the part of the Egyptians in favour of the Soudan campaign being carried on to the bitter end.

It so happened that I called to see Ismail Pasha, who was then on a flying visit to London, very

shortly after the news of the massacre of Kashgil had become known, and asked him what was the policy he himself would recommend in view of the reported intention of the British Ministry to insist upon the evacuation of the Soudan. His answer was that our military authorities in Egypt should determine what was the southernmost point of the Nile they could hold securely with the forces at their disposal, that they should then make this point their base, and that from this base, as occasion offered, they should push southward step by step till they had finally recovered command of Khartoum. If this policy had been adopted and avowed, it would have been better for Egypt, for England, and for the interests of humanity. Unfortunately, this policy was incompatible with the desire of our Government to get out of Egypt at any cost, and still more incompatible with Mr. Gladstone's determination to leave no loophole open by which the country, supposing public opinion should turn in favour of our occupying Egypt permanently, could escape from the obligations contracted in her name. If our Government had contented themselves with saying that, for the time being, the military resources of Egypt were not sufficient to justify a fresh advance on the Soudan, but that the abandonment of the campaign was only a temporary necessity, the suspension of hostile operations would have been acquiesced in by the Egyptian public as a military necessity. Unfortunately a good deal of the misplaced sympathy which had been wasted at home

on Arabi and his associates, had been transferred to the Mahdi and his followers. A belief had gained ground in England that the Soudanese had been driven into rebellion by the oppression and venality of the Egyptian officials, who ruled the country; while the Dervishes were represented by Englishmen, who ought to have known better, as patriots fighting for freedom and independence, and only anxious to be left alone to manage their own affairs.

I do not think the British Ministry of the day—little as I approve of their Egyptian policy—can fairly be blamed for their refusal to send British troops forthwith to the Soudan in order to retrieve the fortunes of the disastrous Hicks campaign. Where they are to blame, was for their inability, or rather their unwillingness, to realize the gravity of the situation. In Egypt, the probability of the Dervishes marching upon Cairo was probably exaggerated in the panic of the hour. But there can be no doubt that the idea of raiding the rich fertile lands of the Nile valley, of looting the wealthy cities of the Delta, of driving the Giaour out of the country, and of restoring the true faith of Islam, was seriously entertained by the victorious Dervishes, and was at a later period brought to the verge of execution. Never before or since, in Egypt, has there been so united and so vigorous an opposition to the advice tendered by the British authorities, as that which made itself manifest on the announcement that Egypt was bidden to evacuate the Soudan for once and for all. The

Khedive, the Ministers, the civil and religious authorities, the native population, and the leading members of the foreign mercantile community, all protested against the surrender of Khartoum as a step likely to prove fatal to the material welfare of Egypt, as well as to her security and safety. The agitation caused in Egypt by the proposal to evacuate the Soudan was so formidable and so widespread, that Sir Evelyn Baring urged upon our Government the paramount importance of taking immediate steps to increase the force of the army of occupation to its original dimensions. As a last resource, the Khedive and his Ministers came to the conclusion that the risk of allowing the Turks to obtain a footing once more on Egyptian soil was less than the peril involved in surrendering the Soudan to the rule of the Mahdi, and therefore proposed, subject to the permission of her Majesty's Government, to request the Porte to send an army of 10,000 men to Suakin, with the object of advancing from that port to Khartoum.

It is doubtful to my mind whether this proposal was not made with the object of bringing pressure to bear on the British Government, and whether, if the proposal had been approved in London, it would ever have been seriously submitted to Constantinople. Lord Granville probably was of the same way of thinking, as he replied that the idea could only be entertained on the condition that Turkey agreed to pay all the expenses of the despatch of a Turkish force to the Soudan, a condition which, it was

certain, would remove any chance of Turkish intervention. On this proposal being dropped, the Egyptian Government was curtly informed that England saw no reason to change her advice in respect of the Soudan; that, so long as her provisional occupation endured, her advice must be followed; and that any native Ministers or officials who declined to act in accordance with this advice must be dismissed from their posts.

If I am rightly informed, the tenor of this despatch was suggested to the Foreign Office by our Consul-General, who had from the outset realized the fallacy of the view entertained in Downing Street, that the Egyptian and the Soudan questions were issues which could be treated separately, and who had contended that so long as England directed the general policy of Egypt, she must also of necessity dictate the policy of Egypt in regard to the Soudan. It is characteristic of the persistency with which Mr. Gladstone clung to the delusion that our occupation was only to be temporary, that in the Foreign Office despatch, which placed before the Egyptian Ministry the alternative of either decreeing the permanent evacuation of the Soudan or of resigning office, care should have been taken to maintain the theory that the occupation was only provisional. Just about this period, while passing through Paris on my way to Egypt, I had a conversation with Baron de Soubeyran, then one of the leading Franco-Egyptian financiers, who asked me what people in England thought of the occupation. I told him

that, whatever my personal opinion might be, it was commonly and honestly regarded as an "*occupation provisoire.*" His answer was, "*Provisoire, je n'en doute pas mais, c'est un provisoire qui durćra eternellement.*" The event, so far, has justified the truth of the prophecy.

The receipt of the above despatch, as communicated by Sir Evelyn Baring, produced a result of rare occurrence in Egypt. The Prime Minister, Cherif Pasha, resigned office on a question of principle, while nobody, for a considerable interval, was forthcoming to take his place. Riaz Pasha and two or three other of the few public men of any eminence in Egypt were offered the post, but one and all declined the honour, on the ground that they did not like to incur the obloquy of signing the decree recommending the evacuation of the Soudan. Public affairs were at a standstill, when the crisis was brought to an end on a report being circulated that if a Ministry were not formed within twenty-four hours, Sir Evelyn Baring had stated he should go down to the public offices and take the administration of State affairs into his own hands. The intimation, however it arose, fulfilled its purpose. On the evening of the day when the report was circulated, our Consul-General was summoned to the Palace, and informed by the Khedive that he agreed to the evacuation of the Soudan, and that Nubar Pasha had consented to form a Ministry prepared to carry out the policy dictated by her Majesty's Government.

On my arrival in Cairo, shortly after, I had an interview with both the outgoing and the incoming Premiers. Cherif Pasha assured me that, though, personally, he disliked office, it had been very painful to him to desert the Sovereign, to whose family he owed so much, at a moment of such grave anxiety. He went on to say there are "things that a man cannot do; one of the things I could not do, as a born Egyptian, an old soldier, and a high official, was to sign a decree, involving, as I hold, the ruin of my country. I do not blame others who hold other opinions, but every man must be the judge of his own honour."

Nubar Pasha expressed almost as strongly his disapproval of compulsory evacuation, and declared that he would not have accepted the Premiership, but for two considerations. The first was that under the existing relations between Egypt and England, it was futile to resist the will of the Power which was in military occupation of the country. The second was that if the Soudan had to be evacuated, he could carry out the evacuation with more regard for Egyptian interests, and with less detriment to Egyptian independence, than any other Minister whose services were available. In the course of my life I have seen too much of public men to have any implicit confidence in official explanations, but in the present instance I am inclined to believe both of the above statements corresponded very closely with the truth.

The Ministerial deadlock was thus brought to a close. The advice of the British Government had prevailed. A native Egyptian Ministry had been formed, prepared to carry out the evacuation of the Soudan; and the Soudanese, having recovered their freedom and independence, ought, according to the Gladstonian theory, to have abandoned all idea of further aggression. Unfortunately, in real life, facts have an awkward way of not harmonizing with theories. When we surrendered the Transvaal on the morrow of Majuba, the Boers ought to have been satisfied with our conceding their demands, and to have lived in good will and friendliness with the Power which had restored their autonomy. But from the day when we evacuated the Transvaal, the Boers began to intrigue against our rule in South Africa. In much the same way, when we had compelled Egypt to follow our example in South Africa and to surrender the Soudan, after the disastrous defeat of the Egyptian troops under Hicks Pasha, the Soudanese ought, in theory, to have been content and thankful. Instead of this, they commenced at once to organize an advance on Egypt. The position of Egypt at this time always reminds me of an old Joe Miller story, about an Irish soldier in some Indian campaign, who was engaged on outpost duty, and who shouted out to the nearest sentry that he had caught a prisoner. On being told to bring the prisoner into camp, he replied, "I cannot, because the fellow will not let me go." Egypt,

according to the contention of our Government, had achieved a great moral victory by evacuating the Soudan. The only objection to the contention was that the Soudanese would not allow the Soudan to be evacuated. There were a number of Egyptian garrisons stationed in different parts of the Soudan, notably at Khartoum, Tokar, and Sinkat, and these garrisons, according to the ideas which found acceptance in Downing Street, ought by rights to have been bidden to depart in peace, as soon as the Soudanese had been assured of their independence. As a matter of fact, the Soudanese changed their attitude after the evacuation had been announced, by inverting our old volunteer motto of "defence, not defiance."

In the Eastern Soudan, Osman Digma, a Suakin merchant, of Turkish descent—and it goes without saying, a noted slave-dealer—joined the Mahdi insurrection, and began operations against the forts within his district still remaining in the possession of the Egyptian troops. As Emir of the Mahdi, he proceeded to besiege Sinkat and Tokar, whose garrisons held out gallantly, but were unable to effect their retreat to the sea coast. The British Government at this period refused to despatch any troops to the Eastern Soudan, or indeed to render any assistance towards the rescue of the besieged garrisons beyond sending Admiral Hewett to cruise off Suakin. In default of any other expedient, an army of some 4000 men was formed with great difficulty in Lower Egypt, and forwarded to Suakin under the command of

Colonel Valentine Baker. This motley army was composed of police constables, of fellaheen recruits, arrested in their villages and sent in gangs to Cairo, and of the refuse of the State prisons. I was one of the spectators who went to the station at Cairo to say good-bye to the General and his staff. The departure was a dismal spectacle. Many of the soldiers were handcuffed ; they were followed by crowds of women, weeping and wailing ; the troops had to be driven like cattle into the trucks provided for them. Drill or discipline, there was none. Even the cheeriness of Baker, and his delight at going once more into action, failed to relieve the general gloom and depression, and the solitary cheer raised by a handful of Englishmen as the train crawled out of the station met with no response. The forebodings created by this spectacle were amply fulfilled. After endless delays and difficulties, Baker succeeded in getting his forces into something resembling order, and landed his troops at Trinkitat, on the Red Sea, whence they were to march on Tokar and relieve its garrison.

On the morning of the 4th of February, the Egyptian troops commenced their advance. They had only accomplished some half-dozen of the forty odd miles of desert which lie between Trinkitat and Tokar, when they were attacked by the Dervishes. Almost before the attack began, the Egyptian troops, officers as well as men, broke up in a panic, and took to flight. The stampede was followed by a massacre. The Dervishes literally hunted the Egyptians, killing

all they came across, till the survivors had reached the shelter of a fort which Baker had erected hard by Trinkitat, for the protection of the transports. The Turkish and Nubian soldiers were the only ones who showed any fight, but they were swept away by the tumultuous retreat of their Egyptian comrades. Nearly two-thirds of the whole force were killed or taken prisoners. Four Krupp guns and two Gatling guns were left in the hands of the enemy. Of the European officers six English and five Italian were killed in gallant but hopeless efforts to rally their terror-stricken troops. What was left of Baker's army was embarked at once on the transports, and proceeded next day to Suakin, where the news of the Dervish victory at El Teb created such excitement amidst the Arab population that it became more than doubtful whether the Egyptian troops under Baker's command could either maintain order within the city or protect it against attack from without. In consequence, Suakin, with the sanction of both the British and Egyptian Governments, was handed over to Admiral Hewett, who garrisoned it with British marines and sailors, and employed the Egyptian soldiers to work in strengthening the fortifications. Immediately after Suakin had been placed under British administration, news arrived that Sinkat had been captured by the Dervishes, and the garrison cut to pieces. The capture of Sinkat was followed within a fortnight by the capitulation of Tokar.

GORDON'S RETURN

Gordon sent to the Soudan to rescue the Egyptian garrisons—Lord Beaconsfield on Gordon.

ONE of the sayings attributed to Lord Palmerston is that, "when he was told that something had got to be done, he knew at once that what his informant really wanted was permission to do something foolish." The truth of this saying was never more fully exemplified than in the days when Gordon was despatched to Khartoum. The British Government, rightly or wrongly, had decided that England, though occupying Egypt, had no obligation to interfere in the affairs of the Soudan, and had compelled the Egyptian Government, sorely against its will, to consent to the evacuation of all the Soudanese provinces. It followed, logically, that if the Soudan was not worth keeping, the fate of any Egyptians who might happen to be stationed at, or resident in, the Soudan, at the time the evacuation was decided upon, was a matter not worth fighting for. A general impression, as I have said, prevailed, not only in Ministerial circles, but amidst the British public,

that, as the Soudanese insurrection was supposed to be a struggle for independence and for the overthrow of Egyptian rule, the Mahdi and his followers would, as soon as their freedom was secured, be only too glad to let the Egyptian soldiers and settlers in the Soudan depart in peace. This delusion was dispelled almost before the evacuation had been decreed. It became evident that the insurrection of the Soudan was not ended by the declaration of Soudanese independence, and that the Mahdi had ulterior objects utterly incompatible with any amicable separation between Egypt and the Soudan. When this truth dawned upon the public mind at home, there was a strong outburst of popular indignation, not so much against the evacuation, as against its logical and necessary consequences.

In spite of our repute as a practical nation, sentiment always plays a greater part in British politics than it does in those of any other country with which I am acquainted. The notion of some thirty thousand Egyptians, men, women, and children, being left to the mercy of the Mahdi and the half-savage fanatics who followed his standard, without any attempt being made to secure their safety, shocked public feeling in England; and this feeling was voiced by the British press. Something had got to be done; such was the cry of the hour, and, as usual, something foolish was done in consequence. The credit, if credit it can be called, of suggesting the employment of General Gordon's services for the

rescue of the Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan, rests with the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which in those days, under the editorship of Mr. Stead, exercised a baleful influence on British opinion. It is only fair to say, that a sort of myth had grown up in England about Gordon's extraordinary faculty of dealing with Oriental races, of winning their confidence, and of moulding them to his will. His personal courage, his contempt for money, his hatred of oppression, his religious fervour, and his sternness of action, tempered as it was by an almost childlike simplicity, appealed to qualities which lie buried in the heart of every born Englishman. The idea of sending out Gordon to arrange the withdrawal of the Egyptian garrisons was caught at by the British Ministry much in the same way as men in financial difficulties grasp at any arrangement which may avert, or at all events postpone, the payment of inconvenient liabilities. Gordon himself was, if my information is correct, confident of success. He held that his personal influence with the Soudanese would enable him to effect, unarmed, a settlement of the Soudan difficulty. The curious part of the whole affair is not that Gordon should have believed in his own success, or that this belief should have been shared by his fellow-countrymen, but that he should have been regarded by statesmen, in a position to known his defects, as well as his merits, as a practical administrator.

In relation to this, let me record a saying of Lord Beaconsfield, which, in as far as I know, has never

appeared in print. At the time when Gordon was on his way to Khartoum, his Lordship was asked at a public dinner, by a gentleman who sat next him, what he thought of the appointment. His reply was that when he had been Prime Minister himself, he had had some idea of sending Gordon to Turkey on a private mission. He therefore requested Gordon to write a memorandum on the subject of the mission he might be asked to undertake. On receiving, however, the memorandum demanded, he found it was in his judgment the work of a madman, and abandoned his idea of availing himself of Gordon's services. Upon this, his neighbour remarked, "After all, Gordon is a good man;" to which Lord Beaconsfield answered, "I hate good men," and dropped the conversation.

The Khedive and the Egyptian Ministers approved of the proposal, not so much, I think, because they had any great belief in Gordon's success, unsupported by a British army, but because they hoped that his presence at Khartoum, as the Envoy of England, might ultimately lead—as it did, but too late—to armed British intervention. I believe the only serious protest against the despatch of Gordon to Khartoum was made by Sir Evelyn Baring, who foresaw the insuperable difficulties of the mission, and doubted whether, if such a mission were desirable, Gordon was the man best fitted for the post. His objections, however, were disregarded; and Gordon, with the energy he displayed in every work to which he put his hand, left London on the 18th of January, 1884, as

Envoy of the British Government, within a few hours of his acceptance of the offer made him by the Ministry, armed with full powers to make any arrangements he might deem advisable. It is, however, characteristic of his singular personality that, on his way out to Egypt, he changed his mind about going to the Soudan simply and solely as an Envoy of Great Britain—a point to which, in his previous interviews with the Government, he had attached special importance—and telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring, suggesting that he should be nominated by the Khedive Governor-General of the Soudan. The request was acceded to without difficulty. It is significant also that in the final memorandum given to Gordon at Cairo by our Consul-General, on behalf of the British Government, it is stated—

"You are of opinion that restoration of the country should be made to the different petty Sultans, who existed at the time of Mahomet Ali's conquest, and whose families still exist; and that an endeavour should be made to form a confederation of these Sultans."

It is obvious from this that Gordon shared the delusion entertained at home that the insurrection was solely caused by Soudanese hatred of Egyptian rule, and that he failed to appreciate the fact that it was the antagonism of the Mahdi and his fellow-fanatics, not of the descendants of the Soudanese chiefs, which he had to encounter. It is noteworthy also that the one non-official visit he paid during his brief sojourn

in Cairo should have been to Zobehr Pasha. Zobehr had been, years before, a trader of note, and a man of influence in the Soudan. In common with all his class, his occupation consisted in procuring slaves, chiefly for the porterage of ivory, but to a smaller extent for sale in the Arabian, Turkish, and Egyptian markets. His family were actively engaged in the raids, by which slaves were obtained. Some few years before, Gordon, while Governor of the Soudan, had taken prisoner, in one of his punitive expeditions for the suppression of the slave trade, a son of Zobehr, and had had him hung. Since that period Zobehr had resided in Cairo, where he was suspected, with or without reason, of acting as a sort of agent for the Mahdi. Probably by this time the idea of re-establishing slavery in the Soudan on his arrival at Khartoum, and thereby inducing the Dervishes to release the Egyptian garrisons, had already presented itself to Gordon's imagination, so fertile in resource, and at the same time so versatile. If this is so, his sudden change of mind about the designation he was to bear during his mission, as well as his visit to Zobehr in Cairo, are easily intelligible. The result of this visit was not encouraging, as Zobehr absolutely declined to enter into conversation with the man who, as he said, had murdered his son. The rebuff, as was shown later on, did not shake Gordon's confidence in his power to win over Zobehr to his side; and, accompanied by Colonel Stewart, he left Cairo on the 26th of January, and arrived at Khartoum—which

was still held by the Egyptian troops—on the 18th of February. He proceeded to inaugurate his return as Governor-General by a number of acts which, however irregular according to British ideas, were calculated to impress the imagination and attract the sympathies of an Oriental population. He caused all official records of debts due for unpaid taxes to be burnt in public, together with all the implements contained in the Government stores for the application of the kurbash. He made a general gaol delivery of all prisoners confined by order of his predecessors, and finally he issued a proclamation rescinding, in the name of the Khedive, all the decrees prohibiting slavery in the Soudan, as forming part and parcel of Egyptian territory.

As I have said before, the object of this "Story of the Khedivate" is to give, in as far as can be done, a consecutive and intelligible account of the chain of events, from the days of Ismail down to those of Abbas, which have rendered England the dominant Power in Egypt. The military campaigns in which our troops have been engaged on Egyptian soil have been the results, rather than the causes, of our paramount position in the land of the Pharaohs, and therefore it is inconsistent with my purpose to assign full importance to the Gordon episode, which, owing to its element of tragic romance, has tended to obscure public appreciation of events of far greater intrinsic magnitude. For the moment, therefore, I must revert to the political situation in Egypt during the

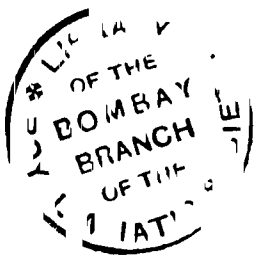
period which elapsed between Gordon's arrival at Khartoum and the investment of the town by the Mahdi's forces.

When the news of Baker's defeat at El Teb arrived in England, public feeling was not satisfied with Gordon having been sent to Khartoum on a special mission of a pacific character. Something had got to be done, and again, in accordance with the maxim I have quoted at the commencement of this chapter, what was done, was something foolish. The home Ministry, influenced, I have no doubt, by the British military authorities in Egypt, who bitterly resented their enforced inaction, resolved to employ British troops to try and rescue the garrison of Tokar. The arrangements for the expedition were completed with great promptitude. The British fleet was ordered to Alexandria, so as to enable the British garrison stationed there to be transferred to Cairo, and on the 24th of February a force of 4000 British troops was landed at Trinkitat, under the command of General Graham. In the course of the same day, news of a trustworthy character arrived to the effect that Tokar had already capitulated. Under these circumstances, there were two rational courses open to our Government, either to recall the expedition at once, or to employ it in a serious attempt to restore the authority of Egypt in the Eastern Soudan, whose sea coast was excluded from the edict of evacuation imposed on the Khedive by his British advisers. Instead of adopting either of these

courses, our Government resolved, notwithstanding the fall of Tokar, to make a military demonstration. The bodies of the British officers killed in the rout of El Teb still remained unburied on the desert sands; and our troops were instructed to march on El Teb, to provide decent burial for all bodies that could be found, to rescue any fugitives who might have escaped from Tokar, and then to retire by land to Suakin. The British forces took possession of Baker's abandoned fort halfway to El Teb, and discovered, by the presence of a large Dervish force in the vicinity, that their advance further inland was likely to be opposed. The discovery was doubtless welcome to troops, in Irish phrase, "spoiling for a fight," but the commanding officers, in accordance with their instructions, felt it their duty to communicate with the insurgents, advising them to retire, and to treat with Gordon at Khartoum as to the arrangements to be concluded between Egypt and the Soudan. The communication, if received, was never answered, and on the 28th of February the British forces continued their march on El Teb. They were attacked by a large force of Dervishes, and after some hours' severe fighting, they cleared the road to Tokar, brought back some hundreds of fugitives, and buried all the corpses who could be in any way identified. After having effected this, they proceeded to Suakin, and there the expedition ended. Two important facts were established by this abortive expedition. The first was the extraordinary courage,

the utter contempt of death, and the resolve either to kill or be killed, which characterized the Dervishes. The second, and more important, was the discovery that courage, however fanatical, is powerless against disciplined troops possessing arms of precision. The establishment of these facts had undoubtedly a bearing on the ultimate outcome of the campaign, but it had little or no effect on its immediate fortunes. Neither the authority of the Mahdi, nor that of his chief lieutenant, Osman Digma, were seriously impaired by the defeats inflicted on the insurgents by Graham's army. Whatever effect these defeats might have produced was neutralized by the precipitate withdrawal of our troops from the Eastern Soudan. General Gordon, not being aware that the Graham expedition was intended solely as a military demonstration, had telegraphed home urging that their services should be employed to open up the Suakin-Berber route. The advantages of this course were manifest, supposing the expedition was to be something more than a sham fight. If the Suakin-Berber route had been rendered available for British troops, there would have been no necessity for the subsequent Nile expedition, and in all likelihood Gordon would have been able to retire from Khartoum, having accomplished his mission. But our Government refused to hear of any step being taken which militated against their resolve to compel Egypt to evacuate the Soudan. The march of an Indian army across the desert from the Red Sea to the Nile, which had been accomplished without

difficulty by General Baird in the early years of the last century, was declared to be an impossibility; and Gordon was left to his fate, in the vain hope that something might turn up to save England the necessity for any armed intervention in the Soudan.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THE SECOND NUBAR PASHA MINISTRY

Nubar's policy as Premier—Dispute between Nubar and Clifford Lloyd —Financial embarrassment of Egypt—The London Conference.

As I have explained, Nubar Pasha had agreed to make himself responsible for the evacuation of the Soudan, not because he approved of the measure in itself, but because he saw it was inevitable, and because he believed that his influence as Premier might render the adoption of this measure less fatal to the independence of Egypt than it would be otherwise. Having been in very intimate relations with him for many years, his policy, to my mind, is intelligible enough. From the time when Ismail Pasha's extravagance had loaded Egypt with an enormous debt, contracted with European creditors, Nubar, as I have already stated, recognized the hard fact that the idea of an independent Egypt was utterly Utopian. His adopted country was therefore bound to fall under the domination of some European Power, or combination of Powers. Of the two alternatives, he preferred the former, and he also never wavered in the

opinion that England was the Power best qualified to exercise this domination with the most advantage to Egypt. The course of events, which Nubar himself may probably have accelerated, had led to the deposition of Ismail, to the removal of the most flagrant evils of personal government, and to the establishment of a state of things, under which security from foreign attack and the maintenance of law and order were guaranteed by the protection of England. Nubar was far too clear-sighted a man to entertain the crude ideas of constitutional government which were put forward in Lord Dufferin's report, and which found favour with English Liberals. The ideas had indeed been embodied in a decree, and have ever since laid dormant; and Nubar, being a statesman of far higher intelligence than poor Midhat, was never carried away by the delusion that Egypt, or any other Mahometan country, could be governed by a native Parliament. He fully realized also, that the practical, as distinguished from the constitutional, reforms recommended by Lord Dufferin, to whose introduction England stood committed, could never be carried into execution unless they were initiated under the advice of European officials. He was therefore in no sense hostile to the employment of foreigners in the Egyptian service, while he recognized that, under the circumstances of the case, the great majority of these officials must be English. But he held persistently to the contention that the European element in the various departments

should, except in the case of the army, be kept in the background, and should exercise their authority through native officials. I am convinced his ideal Government for Egypt, at the period of which I write, would have been similar to that of an Indian protected State, in which our Consul-General should have occupied the position of a Resident, while the Prime Minister of the Khedive should have directed and controlled the native administration. I should say, as the result of many conversations held with him on the subject, that his arguments in favour of this view were much as follows. Reforms, always unpopular in an Eastern country, are necessarily still more unpopular if they are introduced by foreigners, unfamiliar, for the most part, with the language, the usuages, the prejudices, and the ideas of the country to be reformed. He once remarked to me—

"All your English system of criminal justice is based in the end upon the assumption that what mankind dreads most is death. It may be so with you; it is not so with us. What the Oriental fears most is, not death, but interference with his habits and customs during his lifetime."

He also argued that the Executive should be conducted in the name and under the authority of the Khedive, and that the English officials should therefore appear as little as possible upon the stage, and that when they had to pull the wires, they should always do it behind the scenes. To put the matter in a nutshell, his conception was that the native

Premier should be the interpreter of British policy in respect of Egypt, but that he should interpret it in accordance with native ideas and by the instrumentality of officials subject in the first instance to his own authority.

It is impossible to say whether this form of government could ever have worked satisfactorily in Egypt under any conditions. It never had, and never could have had, a fair trial, under the conditions that then existed. Both the British Consul-General and the Egyptian Premier were men of masterful disposition and of marked individuality of character. Neither of them was disposed to efface himself; and neither could have done so, had he wished it. Moreover, the British officials, who entered the Egyptian service after the occupation, were not content to occupy the positions which Nubar would have assigned to them if his ideas had prevailed. I should be most sorry to say a word of disparagement about a body of men, amongst whom I have many personal friends, and for whom I have the highest respect. With very rare and insignificant exceptions, our British officials in Egypt have been singularly honest, able, hard-working men, actuated by a genuine desire to do the best for the country where their services were employed. They were all, however, and especially the Anglo-Indians, imbued with an innate conviction of the superiority of the Briton to the native; and this conviction rendered them naturally prone to assert their importance. If a work had

got to be done, they were convinced they could do it best by themselves. Whether they were right or wrong in this conception of their duty, it is very hard to determine. This much, however, is certain, that the conception was utterly incompatible with Nubar's idea that the British officials should act, as supervisors rather than as administrators. I have endeavoured to explain this fundamental divergence of view between Nubar and the British authorities in Egypt, because it explains the complications which arose subsequently, and because it also shows that the responsibility for these complications rests rather with general causes than with individuals.

Nubar Pasha had only been in office a few weeks when the antagonism between his views and those of the British officials made itself manifest in an acute form. Early in Nubar's Premiership, Mr. Clifford Lloyd was appointed Under-Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior in Egypt. The appointment illustrates one of the many difficulties inherent in the system under which a nominally independent State is really administered by the Government of a foreign country. Mr. Clifford Lloyd had been the right-hand man of the late Mr. W. E. Forster, as Secretary of State for Ireland, during the critical period which preceded the Phœnix Park assassinations. Whether justly, or unjustly, the Gladstone Ministry had decided that Mr. Lloyd had better be removed from Ireland, owing to the intensity of the ill-will he had acquired in the discharge of his duties. At the same

time they could not dismiss him without seeming to repudiate their own policy, of which he had been only too zealous a partisan, and for this repudiation they were not then prepared. In consequence, it was determined, after the usual fashion, to remove him by promotion. The post of the head of the police in Egypt fell vacant; and some one in Downing Street had the happy thought that Mr. Clifford Lloyd was just the personage required to reorganize the Egyptian system. So instructions were sent out to Cairo that the Khedive should be advised to secure the services of the sometime opponent of the Irish Land League. The advice, of course, was followed; the Ministry at home got out of a party difficulty, and Egypt was saddled with about the most unfit person that could be found for a post, requiring great knowledge of the world, extreme tact, good temper, and common sense. I had the pleasure of making Mr. Clifford Lloyd's acquaintance during his brief tenure of office in Cairo, and I understood, for the first time, why a statesman so just, so fair-minded, and so kind-hearted as "Buck-shot" Forster, should have incurred the bitter personal unpopularity he acquired in Ireland. It was impossible not to recognize and respect the extraordinary energy and the courage of which Mr. Clifford Lloyd had given so many proofs. I have no doubt if he had been wanted to lick a savage population into shape, Clifford Lloyd would have been the right man in the right place. But at Cairo, in a highly civilized society, he was nothing more nor less than a bull in a china shop.

He utterly ignored the existence of the Government he was supposed to serve; he paid no attention to the remonstrances of the Prime Minister; he disputed the authority of his British colleague, Sir Benson Maxwell, who held the post of Procureur-General; and in the end his resolve to carry on the duties of his department in his own way, and after his own fashion, became so inconsistent with the respect due to his nominal superior, that Nubar tendered his resignation, and only withdrew it on the assurance that Clifford Lloyd's services would shortly be transferred to some less perilous sphere of action. The promise was carried out, and after a short return to Ireland, Mr. Lloyd was appointed British Consul at Erzeroum in Persia, where he died of cholera soon after his arrival. Great excuse must be made for a man who was placed, against his will, in a position for which he was absolutely unfitted, and who was embittered by the consciousness that his appointment in Egypt, though nominally a promotion, was in truth a recognition of the fact that his services in Ireland had resulted in failure. All the same, I have always regarded it as a not unmixed calamity that his diplomatic career should have been cut short before he had had time to embroil us in hostilities either with Russia or with Persia, or possibly with both. In respect to Egypt, the conflict between Nubar and Clifford Lloyd is only important as an instance of the constant opposition which the former had to face throughout his Premiership.

Moreover, at this period, even if Nubar had had a free hand, the circumstances of the time precluded the possibility of carrying out any constructive programme. Strange as it may seem to us nowadays, there existed at this period a very general apprehension throughout the native population that the Mahdi's forces were about to invade Egypt, and march upon the Delta. British policy was utterly unintelligible to the native mind. Our insistence on the evacuation of the Soudan seemed to the native Egyptians to be dictated by fear of the Mahdi, while they were by no means certain whether the British army had the power to resist the advance of his victorious legions. The Mahdi's successes had been great in fact, and their magnitude had been exaggerated by the rumours of the bazaars. In spite, too, of the terror which the idea of a Soudanese raid inspired in Egypt, the Mahdi commanded an amount of popular sympathy, which had never been enlisted on behalf of Arabi. After all, he was fighting the battle of Islam against the infidel. He had agents in every part of Lower Egypt, who were in constant communication with his messengers. It was discovered that between Cairo and Suakin there was a regular telegraphic service carried on by native traders in these cities, who, under the guise of business orders, conveyed news of the political situation and of the military preparations to Suakin, and who caused these telegrams, on their arrival at the Red Sea port, to be sent on by camel to the headquarters of the

insurgents. I remember Nubar telling me at this time how much he was impressed, from the private reports which reached the Government daily, by the faculty of organization displayed by the Mahdi, and by the system of secret communication he had established throughout all parts of Egypt. I never gathered that Nubar had himself the slightest apprehension as to the military safety of Egypt under our occupation. But I am convinced he regarded the insurrection of the Soudan as a matter of graver importance than was attributed to it by our British authorities.

This view, though on somewhat different grounds, was shared by the Khedive. Tewfik owed his restoration to the throne to the army of occupation, but any sentiment of gratitude he may have entertained on this account was greatly impaired by the manner in which, from his point of view, England, after the victory of Tel-el-Kebir, had espoused the cause of the soldiers who had rebelled against his rule. If he had been allowed to inflict upon the authors and promoters of the mutiny the punishment which, according to Oriental ideas, they richly deserved, he might, he was convinced, have recovered the authority due to his position as the Sovereign of Egypt. As it was, he felt that his people regarded him as a mere puppet, deprived of any power to reward his partisans or to punish his enemies, and only allowed to retain his nominal sovereignty so long as it served the interests of his protectors to maintain him upon the throne. I was much struck, on my return to Egypt, after the suppression

of the mutiny, by the change in Tewfik Pasha's aspect and manner. His recent experiences had matured him marvellously. He had lost the shyness and reserve which had characterized him previously; he had greatly improved his fluency of speech both in French and English; he had acquired a certain knowledge of European politics, superficial, if you like, but still sufficient to enable him to discuss public affairs intelligently with foreigners. I cannot but think that at this period, if it had not been for Nubar's influence, he might easily have given more trouble than he did. I know that in conversation with a native Minister, from whom I heard the anecdote, he said, in reference to the British occupation, "You suppose I like this state of things. I tell you, I never pass a British sentry in the streets of Cairo without a longing to strangle him with my own hands." At a later date, when he became more convinced of the sincerity of British good-will towards Egypt, and of British good faith towards himself, his views changed very materially. But, in the early years of his reign, his latent hostility to England was mainly kept in abeyance by the fear that, if he gave umbrage to the British authorities, the British Government might replace his father on the throne. One can therefore easily understand the difficulties Nubar had to contend with in his endeavour to establish a *modus vivendi* between the *de jure* and the *de facto* Governments of Egypt.

The main difficulty, however, of the situation was,

as heretofore, the question of finance. The loss of revenue caused by the Arabi insurrection, the disastrous expeditions to the Eastern Soudan, the payments required for the Alexandria indemnity, and the cost of the army of occupation, had rendered it impossible for Egypt to fulfil the conditions imposed upon her by the composition arranged under the Law of Liquidation, and had therefore brought her once more face to face with the necessity of having to make default in the obligations she had contracted. The difficulty might easily have been solved if the British Government had consented to provide the means required to enable Egypt to meet her International liabilities. But this idea was regarded as inadmissible in Downing Street. Sir Evelyn was summoned home, and a Conference was held in London to discuss the Egyptian Question. The members of the Conference were Earl Granville, as Foreign Secretary of State; Mr. Childers, as Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the Ambassadors of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Turkey. At this Conference our Government seriously offered to fix a date for the withdrawal of our troops from Egypt, on condition of the Continental Powers agreeing to the suspension of the sinking fund, as well as to the reduction of the rate of interest agreed upon by the Law of Liquidation. If this proposal had been accepted, England would have had to withdraw her troops from Egypt at the date agreed upon by the Conference. Happily for us, France, actuated by her strong desire to protect the interests of the French

bondholders, and still more by her normal distrust of any measure proposed by England, refused positively to entertain the proposal, and thereby threw away once more the chance of getting England out of Egypt. The Conference was adjourned without coming to any definite conclusion or fixing any date for its reassembling.

THE FALL OF KHARTOUM

Position of Gordon at Khartoum—He asks that Zobehr should be sent to succeed him as Governor—British Government refuses request, but resolves to send British army to rescue Gordon under Lord Wolseley—Army despatched too late—Narrative of campaign—Fall of Khartoum and death of Gordon—Expedition ordered to invade Soudan from the Red Sea—Expedition abandoned owing to Russian scare—Death of Mahdi.

THE collapse of the London Conference was partly attributable to the fact that, from the time of its meeting, to that of its close, the necessity for British intervention in the Soudan was daily becoming more imminent. Our Government fondly imagined that, by compelling Egypt to consent to the evacuation of the Soudan, they had relieved England from any necessity of armed intervention. Their policy, whether wise or unwise in itself, might have succeeded in its immediate object if they had adhered to it persistently, and had not, in deference to popular outcry, agreed to Gordon's being sent to Khartoum as the Envoy of the British Government. But the moment our Government had requested Gordon to proceed to the Soudan, in order to effect the relief of the besieged garrisons, they had, however unwillingly, committed England to armed intervention. It is not my intention in these pages to try and pass any verdict as to the respective

responsibilities of General Gordon and the British Government. It must be apparent, from what I have already written, that I am not an ardent partisan of either the General or the Gladstone Ministry. Common fairness, however, compels me to admit that both parties were placed in a position of exceptional difficulty, and that both had reason to complain of one another. I hold that the Government were greatly to blame for not making it clear to Gordon at the outset that his mission was intended as a demonstration, not to be followed up by armed intervention. I hold that Gordon was equally to blame for accepting the mission without making it clearly understood that, in the event of failure, he was to be supported by armed intervention. There is no necessity to accuse one party or the other of deliberate breach of faith. All that can truly be said, is that the Gordon mission to the Soudan was one which would never have been proposed by a wise Government, or accepted by a wise General.

Shortly after Gordon reached Khartoum, he issued a proclamation, stating "that all rebels who continued in arms after the date of the proclamation would be severely punished," and that "British troops are now on their way, and will in a few days reach Khartoum." In as far as I can learn, he had absolutely no authority for the latter statement, except his own conviction that the British Government was in duty bound to send troops for the rescue of the Egyptian garrisons, and might therefore be relied upon to do

so. In a despatch of the same date to Sir Evelyn Baring, he expressed his conviction that the retention of Khartoum was essential to the interests of both England and Egypt, as, if Khartoum was allowed to fall into the hands of the insurgents, the Mahdi would forthwith invade Egypt, and that the task of defeating the invasion would prove far more serious than any campaign which might have to be fought in the Soudan. Every allowance must be made for a man left single-handed to perform an impossible task, and weighed down by an almost morbid sense of responsibility. On the other hand, anybody who reads through the mass of contradictory and extravagant messages which Gordon sent day after day, as long as communication remained open, will admit that considerable allowance should be made for the British authorities if they failed to realize the gravity of the situation. On the 16th of March, Gordon made an attempt to rescue the garrison at Halfiyeh, which failed, owing to the Egyptian troops under his command, some 1500 strong, taking to flight the moment they were attacked by a few score of Dervishes. A week later, the Mahdi rejected the overtures made him by Gordon, and from that time it was obvious that Gordon's mission, in as far as its immediate objects were concerned, was an hopeless failure.

I think it is obvious that by this time Gordon had come to a similar conclusion. Except on this assumption, I find it difficult to account for the resolution

which he formed with respect to Zobehr. It would be an insult to Gordon's memory to suppose that his hatred of slavery and the slave trade was not sincere. He had done everything in his power to exterminate the slave trade in the Soudan, and had waged a relentless war against the Arab slave-dealers, of whom Zobehr was the acknowledged chief. Yet this was the man of all others, whom Gordon requested the British Government to send to Khartoum as his coadjutor, and as his eventual successor in the Governorship of the Soudan. From all I can learn, I think there is a remote possibility that, if this request had been granted, the situation might have been saved. The idea of using Zobehr's great personal influence in the Soudan, especially in his own country lying between Berber and Khartoum, so as to counteract the growing authority of the Mahdi, was one of the occasional inspirations of genius which redeem the manifold failures of Gordon as an administrator. There is, too, an element of heroism in the self-abnegation which induced Gordon to forego his cherished ambition of being known to history as the suppressor of the Soudan slave trade, in order to do the best for the people entrusted to his care. Nobody knew better than he did, that if the Mahdi was allowed to consolidate his rule in the Soudan, the slave trade, with all its horrors and outrages, would revive at once. If, on the other hand, Zobehr could be substituted for the Mahdi, and appointed ruler of the Soudan, as a salaried Egyptian official, acting, in

common with all his fellow-officials, under the supervision of the British authorities in Egypt, it was, to say the least, possible that the evils of the slave trade might be mitigated. I have been told by British officials, who visited the Soudan shortly after the capture of Khartoum by our troops, that the one person whom the Soudanese seemed to know by name amidst the native and foreign notabilities of Egypt was Zobehr; and that the one question they asked, when they learnt that the strangers hailed from Cairo, was whether Zobehr was coming back to the Soudan. The Khedive, his Ministers, and Sir Evelyn Baring were all of opinion that the experiment of his return, as demanded by Gordon, was worth trying. Unfortunately, the British Government vetoed the proposal. From a party point of view, they were right. The appointment of Zobehr, the King of the slave-dealers, to the Governorship of the Soudan, following upon Gordon's proclamation re-establishing slavery, would have given dire offence to the chief supporters of the Liberal cause in the constituencies; while the cry that the Government had handed over the Soudan, bound hand and foot to the slave-dealers, would undoubtedly have been made use of by their political opponents. Possibly a Bismarck might have dared to defy popular sentiment. But Bismarcks are rare anywhere, and rarest of all in England. It must always remain matter for discussion whether the Gladstone Ministry were right or wrong in refusing to allow Gordon to avail himself of Zobehr's services. The only

thing one can say is that, when they refused their consent, they deprived Gordon of his last chance of escaping from the Soudan, without, as he considered, betraying the trust he had undertaken.

Whether at this time Gordon could, or could not, have effected his retreat from Khartoum, must always remain an open question. My impression is that the chances were in favour of his escape, if he had been willing to take to flight. The moot point whether it was, or was not, his duty to remain at Khartoum, is one which depends upon how far Gordon was right in thinking it was due to his own honour not to abandon the post he had accepted. No honest man can blame Gordon, if he decided on remaining faithful to his charge, and, by so doing, to imperil, and, as the event proved, to forfeit his life. I have never quite been able to sympathize with the unreasoning admiration entertained for Gordon by his fellow-countrymen. But I should be ashamed of England, if the story of the gallant stand made by him in the Soudan, and of his stern resolve to lose his life sooner than desert the people he had taken under his protection, had not roused an outburst of popular passion at home, which no Government could resist. By the end of April, Mr. Gladstone had most reluctantly been forced to admit the necessity of sending a British army to rescue Gordon, and the military preparations were forthwith commenced. Even then, however, the Government seems to have clung tenaciously to the hope that something might turn up so as to avert the

necessity for armed intervention. It is obvious that, if any steps were to be taken to relieve Gordon, promptitude of action was the one thing needful. But when people do not want to do a thing, they are always ready to catch at any excuse for postponing its performance. Lord Wolseley, who, it was understood, was to have the command of the expedition, was strongly in favour of using the Nile route. Sir Frederick Stephenson, the General in command of the army of occupation, preferred the Suakin-Berber route. The Government decided in favour of the former, chiefly, I fancy, on the ground that the preparations required for transporting an army up the Nile must necessarily delay the actual despatch of our troops for a considerable period. It was not till the 27th of September that Lord Wolseley left Cairo with his staff. The only step taken up to that period, in the way of relieving Gordon, was the despatch of half a battalion of British troops to Wady Halfa. It is but fair to the late Commander-in-Chief to acknowledge that he did all he could to impress upon the Government the necessity for earlier action. On the 24th of July, he urged Lord Hartington, then Secretary of State for War, to send at once a British force of 3000 men to Dongola, and used the following significant words :—

"But you must know that time presses. I believe that such a force could be sent from England and reach Dongola about October 15th, *if the Government is in earnest*, and acts at once. Remember we cannot command things, and all the

gold in England will not affect the rise and fall of the Nile, or the duration of the hot and cold seasons in Egypt. Time is a most important element in this question, and indeed it will be an *indelible disgrace* if we allow the most generous, patriotic, and gallant of our public servants to die of want or fall into the hands of a cruel enemy, because we would not hold out our hands to save him."

I have underlined two passages in this letter, because they seem to me to confirm a statement made to me at the time, by one likely to know the facts, that the despatch of the expedition was delayed by the extreme reluctance of Mr. Gladstone to authorize the financial arrangements required for its departure, and that it was only when Lord Wolseley announced his intention of resigning the command, if the orders were not signed, that the Prime Minister gave way.

Meanwhile, the position of affairs at Khartoum had become well-nigh desperate. Berber and Shendy had been evacuated by the Egyptian garrisons and taken possession of by the insurgents. A large number of the Egyptian troops in the Soudan had deserted, and joined the rebels. The authority of the Egyptian Government was only recognized in Khartoum, and this last stronghold was already invested by the Mahdi. After the investment all direct communication was intercepted between the General and the British authorities in Cairo. What little record remains of subsequent events at Khartoum is derived from the diary of "the most generous, patriotic, and gallant of our public servants," while

he passed the dreary months waiting for the relief that never came. Whatever else may be said for Gordon, or against him, the story of his death is one of which his country may surely be proud. If, after all, an heroic death may be said to be the most glorious termination of mortal life, Gordon was above all others, *felix opportunitate mortîs*.

For reasons I have already explained, I deem the narrative of the military campaign undertaken for the relief of Gordon to have little direct bearing on the story of the Khedivate. During my visits to Egypt at this time, I was impressed with the little interest apparently taken by the native public in the vicissitudes of the Soudan campaign. The war was not their war. The Egyptian troops, even those commanded by British officers, had little part therein; and in face of our repeated declarations that, whatever might be the outcome of the campaign, the Soudan was to be severed from Egypt, the issue, whether Gordon was to be rescued or left to his fate, possessed but small interest for the Egyptian population.

The main features of the campaign may be briefly stated. On arriving at Wady Halfa, on the 5th of October, 1884, Lord Wolseley received news that Colonel Stewart—in an attempt to reach Dongola by the Nile, and to communicate with the advancing British forces—had been wrecked and murdered, together with Mr. Power, the British Consul at Khartoum, and M. Herbin, the French Consul. It was clear, therefore, that Gordon was now left almost

alone, and that the danger to his life was imminent. The difficulties of a rapid advance were, however, found to be well-nigh insuperable, and it was not till the 5th of November that Lord Wolseley reached Dongola. On Christmas Day the main force of the expedition had just reached Kosh. At this point it was resolved to divide the army into two parts: one, the smaller of the two, to march across the desert to Metemmeh; the other, and larger, to continue their advance up the Nile valley. On the 17th of January, 1885, our troops reached Abu Klea. Here they were attacked by the Dervishes, who were ultimately driven off, though with heavy loss on our side. On the 21st, after several serious engagements, the British force came in sight of the Nile near Metemmeh, and there sighted four steamers flying the Egyptian standard, which had been sent, or were alleged to have been sent, by General Gordon to meet the British advance guard. On the 24th, Sir Charles Wilson, who had succeeded General Stewart—wounded at Abu Klea—left in the Egyptian steamers for Khartoum. The questions, whether this expedition ought to have been sent at all; whether, if so, it should have been pushed on with greater energy, all belong to a domain of military controversy, on which I have no wish to enter. To my thinking, as an outsider, the courage evinced by the handful of British troops who embarked in untrustworthy vessels, manned by crews whom they had every reason to suspect of treachery, who exposed themselves to all the risks of a—to them unknown—

river surrounded on every side by a hostile population, and who incurred all these risks in the forlorn hope of rescuing Gordon, is not unworthy to be classed amidst the most gallant of the many displays of gallantry exhibited by British officers and their men during the Nile campaign.

On their way up the river, the expedition heard reports that Khartoum had fallen, and that Gordon was killed. They pushed onwards, notwithstanding; but on coming within sight of Khartoum they were fired upon from Tuli island, which, at the time the steamers had left, had been one of Gordon's strongholds, and they could not discover any Egyptian flag flying in or near Khartoum. They sent out native messengers to obtain information, who all returned with the intelligence that the Mahdi had entered Khartoum a day or two before their arrival, and that Gordon had been killed. All subsequent inquiries have confirmed the truth of these reports, and I fail to see what reasonable blame can attach to Sir Charles Wilson for having made up his mind to retire at once, and thereby, if possible, to save the lives of the men under his command. The termination of the ghastly tragedy of errors, which ended in Gordon being hacked to pieces only a few hours before the arrival of the relief expedition for which he had waited so wearily and so long, added greatly to the impression produced by the catastrophe on public opinion at home. I think, however, anybody, who reads through the conflicting evidence on the subject

will come to the conclusion that the rescue of Gordon had become hopeless, not hours or days, but weeks, before our advance guard got within sight of Khartoum. The city had lain at the mercy of the Dervishes for a very considerable period. The garrison were worn out, dispirited, and disloyal. Gordon had failed somehow to inspire them with the enthusiasm which his partisans declare he was wont to excite amidst races alien to his own in nationality, and creed, and civilization. It seems well-nigh certain that the Mahdi could have captured Khartoum whenever he thought fit to make the attack. The reason why he delayed the attack so long must necessarily be matter of conjecture. My one surmise, if I had to offer one, would be that, being aware, as he probably was, from his informants in Cairo, that the British expedition was sent with the sole object of rescuing Gordon, he thought it wiser not to precipitate the fall of Khartoum, so that in the event of their attack becoming formidable, he might save the situation by handing Gordon over to the advancing enemy.

Our victories at Abu Klea and Metemmeh, which proved the superiority of the British troops and of their armament to that of the Dervishes, upset the Mahdi's calculations. From that moment the fate of Gordon and of Khartoum was decided. To place the end and aim of the British expedition beyond the possibility of fulfilment, could, under the altered condition of affairs, be alone effected by the capture of Khartoum and the massacre of Gordon and his

European adherents. If our troops had advanced earlier, the agony of Gordon's last days might have been shortened. This is about all that can be said with any approach to certainty. I deem it also probable that the assault may have been retarded by the personal terror which Gordon had undoubtedly inspired amidst the Soudanese during his campaign against the Arab slave-traders. Throughout the East, a man, who is not as other men are, is regarded as in closer communion with Allah than falls to the lot of ordinary humanity; and Gordon, whatever else he may have been, was unlike the vast majority of Europeans as known to the world of Islam. He was, if I am not misinformed, regarded in the Soudan very much as the "Mad Mullah" is regarded to-day by his followers in Somaliland. Only a short time before the fall of Khartoum, the Mahdi sent a message to Gordon, in the following terms:—

"We have now arrived at a day's journey from Omdurman, and are coming, please God, to your place. If you return to the Most High God and become a Moslem, and surrender to His order and that of His prophet, and believe in us as the Mahdi, send us a message after laying down your arms and giving up all thoughts of fighting, so that I may send you some one with safe conduct, by which you will obtain benefit and blessing in this world and the next. Otherwise, if you do not act thus, you will have to encounter war with God and His prophet. And know that the Most High God is mighty for your destruction, as He has destroyed others before you, who were much stronger than you, and more numerous."

If this communication was not intended as a taunt, but was meant as a genuine proposal, it would explain much that is otherwise unintelligible in the Mahdi's attitude towards Gordon, and would tend to confirm the rumour that, up to the last, the Mahdi wished to have had Gordon taken alive.

The news of Gordon's death, of the capture of Khartoum, and of the massacres which followed the Mahdi's victory, created intense excitement in England. The tide of popular passion carried all before it. The Ministry were, I have no doubt, themselves influenced by the feeling of the hour, as well as by political considerations, and when Parliament opened, on the 19th of February, the Government announced that they had come to the decision to advance on Khartoum in order to destroy the power of the Mahdi, but that, before this, the plan of campaign must be discussed and arranged between Lord Wolseley and the War Office. I should, perhaps, mention here that Lord Hartington, if common report is correct, had throughout been the chief advocate in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of a warlike policy. The advanced period of the season, coupled with the lowness of the Nile, precluded any immediate action. It was therefore agreed to suspend military operations till the autumn, when a fresh advance was to be made on Khartoum along the Nile valley. This advance was to be preceded by the despatch of a British army of 9000 men to Suakin, who were to march from there to Berber across the desert, and were to

join the main army under Lord Wolseley. With the view of facilitating these operations, a railroad was to be constructed with the utmost speed from Suakin to Berber, and for this purpose, the Government, previous to the meeting of Parliament, had secured the services of the well-known contractors, Messrs. Lucas and Aird.

The announcement of the intended renewal of the campaign served, at any rate, the political purpose for which it was devised. After a protracted debate in Parliament on the Soudan, the Government barely escaped a vote of censure in the House of Commons by the narrow majority of fourteen. So long as the hot fever lasted, the preparations for the autumn campaign were pushed on with energy. Before February was over, the East Soudan expedition commenced assembling at Suakin under General Graham, who shortly afterwards took the command in person. During the course of the month there were several skirmishes between our troops and the Dervishes. Marches were made into the desert to villages a few miles distant from the coast, where Osman Digma and his troops were reported to be located.

None of these skirmishes, however, had any serious effect on the prospects of the coming campaign, except in as far as they afforded proof that the daring of the Dervishes was still unimpaired, but that in the end they must succumb to the superior organization and discipline of the British forces. By the beginning of May the ardour of the British Ministry in the

prosecution of the war appears to have died away. The discovery that the railway across the desert could not possibly be completed in time to be of any assistance to the campaign—however great its use might be in keeping open our communications with Khartoum, in the case of a British occupation—seems to have come upon the Government as a surprise. The works already commenced on the railway were discontinued, in obedience to orders from home. The unloaded plant and machinery were returned to their owners, and finally the expedition, despatched in hot haste after the fall of Khartoum in order to crush the insurrection in the Eastern Soudan, was recalled, having accomplished nothing beyond making an ineffective demonstration, which left the Mahdi and his lieutenant Osman Digma as powerful as ever.

The chapter of accidents had furnished the Gladstone Administration with an excuse for the abandonment of the Soudan campaign, which the majority of its members, with the Premier at their head, were only too glad to seize. The news that a Russian army was advancing towards Herat, and that the Afghans had been attacked by Russian troops at Pendjeh—a place which, according to local contention, lay within Afghan territory—occasioned a panic in England—a panic which was increased by the attitude of the Government, who forthwith called out the reserves, and demanded a war credit of £11,000,000. No doubt if there was any reasonable prospect of our

having to go to war with Russia, common sense dictated the abandonment, or, at any rate, the postponement, of a fresh Soudan campaign. It is of course possible that the Government may have had private information, which led them to believe a war between England and Russia to be really imminent. But, looking back at the Pendjeh incident with the light of our subsequent experience, it seems to have belonged to the ordinary category of frontier disputes, which may furnish a pretext—but do not constitute a cause—for war, and which, as in this instance, can easily be settled if there is no desire for war on the part of either potential belligerent. The Pendjeh difficulty was terminated in the first days of May, by the reference of the matter in dispute to the King of Denmark; and if our Government had been so minded, it would have been perfectly within their power to resume the preparations for an autumn campaign on the Nile. Various suggestions were made by British authorities in Egypt, civil as well as military, to induce the Government to modify their determination to leave the Soudan to its fate. These suggestions, however, met with no response. A vigorous protest was made by Sir Evelyn Baring, who, in a despatch to the Foreign Office, used these words—

"In view of the decision of the Government (to evacuate Dongola), instructions should be given to send down all troops and as many of the civil population as wished to leave to Wady Halfa. . . . Your lordship will understand that we

make this recommendation only because we consider it to be the necessary consequence of the decision of her Majesty's Government to abandon the province of Dongola at once, but that it must in no way be taken to imply our agreement with that decision."

It was all in vain. Evacuation pure and simple was the order of the day. On the 14th of May, Sir Evelyn was informed that the British troops must all be withdrawn, and that a sufficient force must be left at Wady Halfa to guard the frontier. By this decision the whole of the Soudan, with the exception of the Red Sea ports, was surrendered to the rule of the Mahdi. Mr. Gladstone resigned shortly afterwards on the defeat of his Budget proposals. Lord Salisbury succeeded to office on the 24th of June. By this time, however, the evacuation was nearly completed. Moreover, as the Conservatives were in a minority in the existing Parliament, and had, as the event proved, a very scanty prospect of obtaining a majority in the Parliament about to be elected, they could hardly be expected to take upon themselves the grave responsibility of reversing the decision of their predecessors. At any rate, they failed to do so. In concluding my brief sketch of this "campaign without an end," let me quote a passage from a despatch written by Lord Wolseley to Lord Salisbury, just after the latter's accession to office, which seems to me a marvellous proof of sound judgment—

"You cannot get out of Egypt for many years to come. If the present policy of retreat be persisted in, the Mahdi will become stronger and stronger, and you will have to increase

your garrison and submit to the indignity of being threatened by him. Eventually, you will have to fight him to hold your position in Egypt, which you will then do with the population round you, ready, on any reverse, to rise against you. No frontier force can keep Mahdism out of Egypt, and the Mahdi must sooner or later be smashed, or he will smash you."

The foresight of this statement would, I think, have been fully justified by the result, but for an unforeseen casualty. At the very height of the Mahdi's success, when the British armies had retired, not indeed defeated, but baffled, when his authority was acknowledged over the whole territory of the Soudan, and when he was regarded by the Mahometan population of inland Africa as the chosen messenger of the one God, sent to restore the rule of Islam, he died suddenly in Omdurman of small-pox. Such, at any rate, was the reputed cause of his death. Once more fate or fortune saved us in Egypt from the consequences of our own errors.

THE NORTHBROOK MISSION

Effect in Egypt of the withdrawal of the British troops from the Soudan —Recurrence of financial difficulties—Difficult position of Nubar as Premier—Sir Evelyn Baring summoned home to consult with her Majesty's Government—Lord Northbrook sent out to Egypt—He orders funds hypothecated to the service of the Debt to be paid into Treasury—Continental Powers protest—International courts decide in favour of the protest—The London Conference—The Suez Canal neutralized—Proposal to construct second canal—Zobehr Pasha imprisoned at Gibraltar.

I MUST now revert to the story of Egypt as distinguished from that of the Soudan. Throughout the whole period of the Nile campaign, Nubar Pasha remained nominally at the head of public affairs. He had, however, neither time nor opportunity for carrying out the ideas he had at heart. The whole organization of the State was out of gear. In Europe the military campaigns conducted by our forces in Egypt had produced a very marked effect. The energy, the courage, and the discipline of our troops under the most trying conditions had raised our military prestige. The amount of blood and money we had lavished on behalf of Egypt strengthened the Continental belief that we were never likely, except under compulsion, to abandon a tenure for which we had

paid so dearly. But in Egypt itself, the impression produced by our campaigns was of a very different character. We had insisted upon Egypt abandoning the Soudan on the ground of expense. We had thereby given an immense impetus to the Mahdi insurrection. We had sent out Gordon to secure the release of the beleaguered Egyptian garrisons, a matter which we could probably have effected easily if we had not compelled the Egyptian Government to consent to evacuation before the Mahdi had agreed to release the Egyptian garrisons. We had sent an expedition, at enormous cost, to rescue Gordon, after the failure of his mission, and then, when our troops had got within sight of Khartoum, we had suddenly turned tail, without making the slightest effort to re-establish order in the Soudan, or even to protect the tribes which had remained loyal to Egypt, and which had assisted our advance. After our retreat, we had taken no steps whatever to protect Egypt against the risk, which was then deemed imminent, of an invasion by the victorious Dervishes. Such was the view popularly taken in Egypt of our action at the period of which I write. The view was not a just one, as the future was to prove; but it was one which would not unreasonably be taken by a population irritated in its pride, injured in its interests, and endangered in its prospects by the policy our Government had pursued. At this time, too, the confidence of the Egyptian public in the duration of our military occupation had been

rudely shaken. During the two years which had elapsed since Tel-el-Kebir had made us the dominant Power in Egypt, we had done little, or nothing, to manifest our intention of making our ascendency permanent. On the contrary, England had done everything in her power to create the impression that she was only a temporary occupant of the valley of the Nile.

Again, the material advantages accruing from a reign of law and order under British protection, whether temporary or permanent, had not as yet made themselves manifest. The financial position was again surrounded with embarrassments. The Arabi insurrection, the Alexandria indemnity, the outbreak of cholera, the falling off of the revenue, and the cost of the Egyptian military campaign in the earlier days of the Mahdi's rising, had rendered it impossible for Egypt to meet the liabilities she had agreed to accept in return for the reductions effected by the Law of Liquidation. A fresh loan was imperatively required in the interest of Egypt, but no loan could be raised without the consent of the Continental Powers, and this consent was not forthcoming so long as England refused to show her hand in regard to Egypt.

Under these circumstances, the personal position of Nubar was one of extreme difficulty. However strongly he disapproved individually of the policy of the British Government, he had officially, as Prime Minister, to accept the responsibility for the various

measures required to carry this policy into effect. One instance will, I think, suffice to illustrate his position. When the Gladstone Ministry had at last made up their minds to abandon all further attempt to overthrow the supremacy of the Mahdi throughout the Soudan, Nubar sent the following message through the British Consul-General :—

"Nubar Pasha, on behalf of the Egyptian Government, requests me to make a final and most earnest appeal to the Government of her Majesty, to postpone the departure of the British troops from Dongola for, say, six months, in order that there may be at least a chance of establishing a Government there. Nubar Pasha fears that the retreat of the British from Dongola will react on Egypt, and especially on the southern provinces, to such an extent as will render it impossible for the Khedive's Government to maintain order, and that they will be forced to appeal to her Majesty's Government for help to preserve order in the country, and that thus the present system of government, which her Majesty's Government have been at so much trouble to maintain, will be found no longer possible."

This appeal may have been deemed worthy of consideration, but, in as far as I can ascertain, no answer was vouchsafed. It was always a sore point with Nubar Pasha that he had no power to communicate directly with the British Government, but had to submit his views, if at all, through the medium of the British Consul-General. Apart from considerations of official routine, there are obvious objections to any personal communication between the Minister of a foreign State and the home Government, otherwise than through the channel of their accredited

representative in the State in question. Still, the position of Nubar, as Prime Minister of Egypt, was of an extremely exceptional character, and, as I have reason to know, though he had perfect confidence in the loyalty with which his communications were transmitted, he felt strongly about the inconveniences arising from the necessity of explaining to the British Government his objections to any policy, on which he might not be of the same mind as our Consul-General, through the medium of the very official with whose policy he happened to disagree.

What rendered Nubar's position in this respect even more irksome, was the fact that in France, and in Egypt, he was regarded as the trusted agent and instrument of the British Government. On the other hand, from a variety of causes, some personal, some public, he, in reality, never quite commanded the confidence, however much he might command the respect, of the British authorities in Egypt. It was the same with the Khedive at this period. His Highness was surrounded by advisers, chiefly of French extraction, who assured him that England had not the will, even if she had the power, to restore order in Egypt; that his own authority was being undermined by his being identified in popular opinion with the policy dictated by England and executed by Nubar; and that, in the interest of his dynasty, he ought to assert his independence, dismiss Nubar, and trust to France to espouse his cause and protect his interests. This sort of idle talk was not

displeasing to Tewfik, who resented bitterly the enforced evacuation of the Soudan, and who entertained a suspicion that his chief Minister was acting rather in the interest of England than of Egypt. Tewfik, however, was too sensible not to perceive that, while Egypt was occupied by a British army, he could not afford to incur the displeasure of England. He therefore acquiesced reluctantly in any suggestions from the British authorities in Egypt which Nubar declared could not be disregarded without giving umbrage to the British Government. But, though he gave way, he yielded unwillingly; and Nubar, as he said to me at the time, had to be the buffer between the British and Egyptian Governments. There was about Nubar a sufficient amount of Oriental suppleness to enable him to fill the post of a buffer with success; but there was also too much of personal independence of character to allow him to fill such a post without mortification and regret.

The financial crisis in Egypt became so acute in April, 1884, that Sir Evelyn Baring was summoned to London to consult with the Government about the measures which must be adopted in order to save Egypt from bankruptcy. After the collapse of the London Conference, of which I have already spoken, Lord Northbrook was sent out as High Commissioner to Cairo, in the month of August, 1884, to make some arrangement which might rescue Egypt from her financial difficulties. By his advice, the Egyptian

Government ordered the local authorities to pay the receipts from the revenues affected to the service of the public debt into the Treasury, instead of to the Commissioners of the International *Caisse de la Dette*. The order was a distinct violation of the Law of Liquidation, and ought never to have been issued unless the British Government had been willing to accept the consequences, and make themselves responsible for any loss the creditors of Egypt might sustain by so high-handed a measure. This step our Government was not prepared to take. Thereupon the Continental Powers protested strongly against the measure in question, which, however justifiable on the ground of emergency, was, technically, at any rate, an act of repudiation. The Commissioners of the Public Debt, as they were legally entitled to do, sued the Egyptian Government before the International courts, and obtained judgment in their favour. Thereupon Egypt had to withdraw the obnoxious decree, issued on the advice of the British High Commissioner. An appeal was made, however, against the judgment of the International Court of First Instance of Cairo to the High Court of Alexandria. There can be no doubt that the superior Court would have confirmed the judgment of the inferior, and this fact, we may safely assume, was realized by the British Government. The negotiations between England and the Continental Powers, which had been broken off after the indefinite adjournment of the London Conference, were resumed before the appeal came on for hearing.

Upon our Government admitting that the action of the Egyptian Government, adopted on the advice of our Envoy, was *ultra vires*, the Continental Powers consented to the issue of a loan of £9,000,000, and agreed to stay all further legal proceedings.

The so-called "London Convention" of July 17, 1885, stipulated, amongst other conditions, that, in consideration of the Powers agreeing to sanction the loan of £9,000,000, an International Commission should meet in Paris to decide how the unrestricted passage of the Suez Canal might best be permanently secured. It was decided, generally, that the Canal should be open alike to merchant vessels and men-of-war, both in time of war and peace; that the Canal should not be subject to the right of blockade; that no act of hostility should be committed in the Canal, its ports of access, or within a radius of three miles; that vessels of belligerents should only take in supplies so far as they were absolutely necessary, and that their stay in port should be limited to twenty-four hours; that no belligerent should disembark or embark either troops or munitions of war; that no vessel of war belonging to the contracting Powers should be stationed in the Canal, and not more than two at Port Said or Suez; that the restrictions imposed should not apply to measures which the Sultan or the Khedive might take for the defence of Egypt by their own forces, or for the maintenance of public order; and that no fortifications should be erected.

The British delegates agreed to this proposal,

subject to the reservation that its provisions should not be enforced in the event of their proving to be incompatible with the "existing situation in Egypt, or fetter the action of her Majesty's Government or the movements of her Majesty's forces during the British occupation of Egypt." The Commission refused to accept the proposed restriction, and the formal ratification of the Convention did not take place till the 22nd of December, 1888. In as far as paper agreements are of any binding value, the neutrality of the Canal is, no doubt, absolutely guaranteed. How far its terms would be observed in the event of war between two great European Powers must be matter of opinion. For my own part, I venture to predict that in any war, of which Egypt might be the scene, no great Power will ever dream of observing the neutrality of the Suez Canal, supposing this neutrality conflicted with her military interests. The only Power which might possibly hesitate about violating the Convention would be England, and I doubt whether even her hesitation would be of long endurance.

I should say myself that, from the French point of view, the chief value of the Convention was that it gave a sort of International title to the Suez Canal Company, which is in reality a French association constituting a sort of *imperium in imperio* on the soil of Egypt, and which in its character of a French undertaking has always been under the special protection of the French Government. The considerations which induced our Government to acquiesce in the

contention that the Suez Canal is a French enterprise under French protection, are illustrated by an incident which occurred about this period, and which, I believe, is not generally known.

As I have explained, the Suez Canal, though carried through Egyptian territory, though constructed mainly by funds furnished by Egypt and by unpaid Egyptian labour, contributes nothing whatever to the revenue of Egypt. It always has been felt a grave grievance by Egypt that no share of the enormous profits of the Trans-isthmus Canal is allotted to her, and that while all other countries benefit more or less by the water highway between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, Egypt is the only country which has been actually a loser by its construction. Tewfik Pasha held, I know, very strongly that whatever might be the legal force of the contracts entered into between his predecessors, Said and Ismail, and the Suez Canal Company, these contracts were contrary to justice and equity, and ought by rights to be set aside, should any opportunity present itself. Such an opportunity seemed to present itself in the year of the London Convention.

The extraordinary financial success of the Canal had naturally led to an examination of its charters; and as the examination was conducted by Egyptian financiers, who were intimately acquainted with the inner history of its construction, they came to the conclusion that the various concessions, on the strength of which the Canal was made, conferred no kind of monopoly upon

M. de Lesseps or upon the Company of which he was the founder. They caused surveys and estimates to be made, and ascertained that it would be possible to construct a second canal of greater width and depth, running through the desert of Sinai, parallel to the existing Canal, for about one-quarter of the cost of the present Canal. They then applied to the Khedive, and offered, if he would give them a concession for a new canal, to make a contract under which Egypt would be entitled to a large share—I believe 25 to 30 per cent.—of the profits. His Highness received the proposal favourably, and would, I believe, have granted the concession on his own authority, if he could have been certain of the consent of the British Government. The promoters assured him, with some reason, that the British shipping community was extremely irritated at this period at the heavy charges and vexatious regulations imposed on British vessels by the French officials of the Company, and that the construction of a rival canal would be very popular with British shipowners, and would be gladly supported by British capitalists.

As to the moral rights or wrongs of the question at issue, there is a good deal to be said on both sides, though there can, I think, be no doubt about the fact that the concession given the Suez Canal Company conferred upon it the right to construct a canal across the desert, but contained no undertaking whatever that a similar concession should not be given to any rival Company. It may be urged that no prudent

man would ever have agreed to make the original canal if he had not considered he possessed a monopoly during the period of a hundred years for which the concession was granted. As against this, it may be pleaded that Ferdinand de Lesseps was emphatically not a prudent man; that at the time when he obtained his concession public opinion was so unfavourable to the success of his enterprise, that he may reasonably have neglected to contemplate the contingency of a second canal; and that he may have purposely omitted all claim to any monopoly as being likely to furnish the British Government, under Lord Palmerston, with a fresh ground for using his influence with the Porte to prevent the execution of his enterprise. If, as a general principle, it seems sharp practice to avail one's self of a possibly accidental flaw in a lease in order to deprive the lessee of the consideration for which he made the purchase, it may fairly be argued, on the other hand, that in this particular instance the lessor had been so scurvily treated throughout the whole transaction that he was fully justified in availing himself of any flaw in the lease in order to evade an onerous and one-sided bargain.

The proposal for the construction of a rival canal was communicated in due course to the British Government, and, from what I gathered, caused considerable annoyance to the Foreign Office. The case was submitted to the Law Officers of the Crown, and they gave it as their opinion that though no monopoly was granted by the concession to M. de Lesseps, it must

be considered as implied by the circumstances under which the concession was demanded and accorded. How far, in any ordinary financial contract, it is possible to read in a clause not contained in the original document, is a point I, for one, should incline to doubt.

At the same time, I think our Government were justified in not scrutinizing too closely any plausible plea which enabled them to inform the Khedive that the concession he had been asked to grant must not be granted. If an Anglo-Egyptian Company had been given permission to make a new canal, which, whether successful or otherwise, must infallibly have injured, if not ruined, the Suez Canal, the national interests and the national pride of France would have been outraged to a pitch which would have either rendered peaceful relations impossible, or would have led to the reopening of the whole Egyptian question under conditions most unfavourable to England. If I am rightly informed, Tewfik himself fully realized the "Necessity of State" which compelled our Government to refuse their consent to the construction of a second canal across the Isthmus of Suez.

Probably he shared the opinion, commonly held in Egypt at the time, that the British Government might well have availed itself of the alarm created in the Suez Canal Company, by the possibility of a competing canal being constructed, to obtain some share for Egypt in the profits of an Egyptian undertaking.

This opinion was all the more strongly entertained owing to the fact that our Government did obtain certain advantages on this occasion for the British shipowners, and notably the addition to the board of the Company of a considerable number of British directors. But, in respect of the Suez Canal Company, it is always Egypt which has had to pay the piper.

Of all the incidents in the relations between England and Egypt, to my mind, the least creditable, not, indeed, to our Envoy personally, but to the Government, was the recommendation in virtue of which Egypt was advised by Lord Northbrook to take up an illegal position, and was then left in the lurch to bear the consequence of having followed our advice. A curious comment upon the vacillation of our national policy in respect of Egypt is afforded by the fact that almost at the same time, when we repudiated any responsibility towards Egypt for having followed the advice given her by our Envoy, Lord Wolseley, as Commander-in-Chief of the British army of occupation, had caused Zobehr Pasha to be deported to Gibraltar. The municipal council of the British fortress was instructed to pass an order confining him as a State prisoner at a house on the Punta d'Europa road, on the ground that his detention was demanded by the interests of the British Empire in respect of Egypt; and for many years Zobehr remained imprisoned at Gibraltar.

THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION

Sir H. Drummond Wolff sent to Constantinople as High Commissioner to negotiate Convention with Turkey in respect of Egypt His appointment mainly due to Lord Randolph Churchill's influence Mukhtar Pasha selected as fellow-commissioner—Negotiations at Cairo suspended by Einisterial crisis in England—Negotiations resumed on Lord Salisbury's return to office Convention concluded at Cairo—Rejected by the Porte at instance of France.

On the 24th of June, 1885, the conduct of our relations with Egypt passed for the time out of the hands of Lord Granville into those of Lord Salisbury. The change of management was at once manifest. Shortly after the accession to office of the new Ministry, an old acquaintance of mine, who was then the head of one of our chief Embassies, and who in home politics was a staunch Liberal, told me that, until Lord Salisbury had replaced Lord Granville as the coachman of the diplomatic team, he had never realized the feelings of a cab-horse when a driver, who had no idea of driving, was replaced by one who knew how to handle the reins. Nowhere was the changed aspect of affairs more palpable than in Egypt. For the first time since the days of Lord Beaconsfield

the British Government had a policy. The policy may not have been a wise one. From my own point of view, it was eminently unwise. Still, a bad policy is better than no policy at all. Within a short time of his accession to office, Lord Salisbury, with the approval of his colleagues, resolved to make a definite effort to bring about the withdrawal of the army of occupation. The arguments in favour of such a course were numerous and powerful. We had made such a mess of our intervention in Egypt; we had entered into such a number of conflicting engagements; we had so committed ourselves by uncalled-for protestations; we had done so little good, as it seemed, to Egypt; and we had let slip so many opportunities of consolidating our hold on the country, that we had got entangled in a Gordian knot, which could only be unravelled by cutting its meshes. Such, at any rate, was the impression of the British public, and this impression, I have every reason to believe, was shared by the great majority of our leading statesmen on the Conservative side, no less than on the Liberal. At that time nobody out of Egypt, and very few people there, believed in the possibility of forming a really efficient native army in Egypt, even under the command of British officers. Unless, therefore, the British army was to remain permanently, it was necessary to provide some sort of military force which could secure the continuance of order after our own troops had been withdrawn. A French occupation was incompatible with British interests in the East. An International occupation was

still less to be thought of. Thus, by a process of exhaustion, the partisans of withdrawal arrived at the conclusion that a Turkish military occupation under British supervision was the only practicable solution of the Egyptian difficulty. A similar solution had at different times been favoured by the preceding Administration. But the attempts to carry this idea into execution had been made with so little energy, and with such vacillation of purpose, that it never got beyond the phase of contemplation. In the present instance, however, the idea, whether sound or unsound, assumed a practical form. Lord Iddesleigh—then Sir Stafford Northcote—was, I have reason to know, very anxious to have our troops withdrawn from Egypt. So also, I think, was Lord Salisbury, though, from his great knowledge of foreign affairs, he was far more alive to the difficulties and disadvantages inseparable from withdrawal. The other Ministers were, to say the least, not hostile to the idea, and were greatly influenced by the fact that Lord Wolseley, looking at the question from a purely military point of view, gave the support of his high authority in favour of withdrawal, on the ground that the maintenance of an army in Egypt constituted a source of weakness in the event—improbable, but not impossible—of an European war, in which England might be involved.

The initiative, however, in formulating a practical proposal for the execution of the idea came, if I am rightly informed, from a member of the Cabinet,

who in popular appreciation was regarded as the champion of, what may be called, militant Conservatism. I allude to Lord Randolph Churchill, who was Secretary of State for India in the new Administration. The some time leader of the Fourth party was then looked upon as the coming man. The promise of his youth was left unfulfilled, and therefore his true place in the political history of our times can never be fully determined. I, for one, having known him intimately, have never wavered in my conviction that, if health and opportunity had been given him, he would have developed into a great statesman. I only reassert this conviction because I should be sincerely sorry if what I have to say in connection with the Mukhtar-Wolff Mission should seem in any way to detract from the views I have often expressed elsewhere as to his claims to eminence, not only as a party leader, but as a statesman. Foreign politics had not, I think, at any time of his life, a great attraction for him. His mind, especially at this period, the eve of the espousal of Home Rule by the Liberal party under Mr. Gladstone, was absorbed in home questions, and it is no disparagement to him to say, that he trusted to his marvellous faculty for assimilating the knowledge of others to make up his mind about foreign affairs, with which he had little or no personal acquaintance. Regarding himself, as he did undoubtedly at this time, as the political heir of the late Lord Beaconsfield, he held strongly to the opinion that co-operation with Turkey ought to be the basis

of England's foreign policy, especially in regard to the Eastern Question. He was therefore naturally predisposed to favour the idea of securing the active support of Turkey, and, by so doing, to enable England to withdraw her troops from Egypt. Amongst Lord Randolph's political and personal friends was Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, a man with very extensive knowledge of Eastern affairs and Oriental countries. It was mainly from him that the then Secretary of State for India derived his views about our policy in the East. Sir Henry suggested the advisability of sending a special Envoy to Constantinople to negotiate a Convention with Turkey, in virtue of which order was to be maintained in Egypt by Turkish troops, in case disturbances should ensue upon the withdrawal of our army. Lord Randolph adopted the suggestion as his own, and exerted his great influence with his colleagues to get the author of the project appointed to conduct the negotiations at Constantinople.

The preliminary stage of the negotiation was comparatively easy. The Sultan and the Porte were alike well disposed towards the notion of sending troops to Egypt, provided their expenses were guaranteed. If once Turkish authority was re-established in the Nile valley, there would obviously be great difficulty in upsetting that authority, and still greater difficulty in hindering the Turkish officials from making a profit out of their sojourn in the country. Sir H. Drummond Wolff succeeded in

obtaining the consent of the Sultan to the appointment of a Commissioner, who was to discuss with him in Cairo the terms of an arrangement by which England was to pledge herself to withdraw her troops at a date to be fixed hereafter, while Turkey was to bind herself to send an army to Egypt in case of need, in order to uphold the Khedivial Government. It is characteristic of Turkish politics that the Envoy selected for this purpose was Mukhtar Pasha, who was chosen, not on account of his high military repute acquired in the Turko-Russian war, but because this very repute was considered by the Sultan as an adequate reason for exiling him permanently from the banks of the Bosphorus. Fifteen years and more have come and gone since Ghazi-Mukhtar Pasha, the hero of the Caucasus campaign, arrived in Egypt, and throughout this period he has never been allowed to quit Egypt, on the plea that his presence there is essential to Turkish interests. At Cairo, the negotiations proceeded far from rapidly. The Egyptian Government was bitterly opposed to any arrangement which might render Turkey master of the situation. The Continental, and especially the French, bondholders considered that any kind of Turkish intervention in Egyptian affairs would imperil their financial interests, while the British authorities in Egypt, including, I believe, Sir Evelyn Baring, were extremely doubtful as to the advantage of the proposed Convention, even if it could be carried into effect. Meanwhile, before any understanding

had been arrived at, the general election of January, 1886, returned a Liberal majority, and Mr. Gladstone resumed office. During the brief session, which ended in the Liberal Unionist secession, and in the consequent defeat of the Ministry, the Government had no time to turn its attention to other than home matters, and consequently the Anglo-Turkish negotiations at Cairo remained in abeyance. The elections of July gave the Conservatives an overwhelming victory. Lord Salisbury returned to power, with Lord Randolph Churchill as leader of the House of Commons, and, as soon as the new Government were able to attend to foreign affairs, the negotiations at Cairo were resumed. The Sultan, after the fashion of vendors in all parts of the world, and especially of the Eastern world, began to increase his terms as soon as he saw the purchaser was anxious to get the sale settled, and raised various objections, which, as he alleged, might stand in the way of the execution of the contract. The chief difficulty raised was that while Turkey was asked to bind herself to send an army to Egypt under certain contingencies, which could only arise after our troops had been withdrawn, our Government was reluctant to commit itself beforehand to any fixed date for evacuating Egypt. I should doubt, however, this objection having been seriously maintained, if our Envoy had been in a position to use the good old arguments, which Turkey has seldom hitherto been able to resist. But, by the conditions under which he had to negotiate, he was unable either

to bribe or bully. My friend, Sir Drummond Wolff, made, I am sure, the best arrangement consistent with his instructions and the policy he had in view. The Khedive and his Ministers objected to the presence of Mukhtar Pasha, and to the attitude he assumed as a High Commissioner appointed by the Suzerain to effect a settlement of the internal affairs of a subject province; while the British authorities in Egypt had no desire to promote the successful conclusion of a Convention which most of them regarded as directly opposed to the interests of England and Egypt. In spite of many discouragements, Sir Henry persevered in his task, and finally, in May, 1887, came to an agreement with Mukhtar Pasha as to the terms of the proposed Convention. By this Convention, England bound herself to withdraw the army of occupation at the end of three years from the date of signature, unless trouble, whether from within or without, should arise in Egypt before the withdrawal of our troops. In this contingency our occupation might be prolonged, but must be terminated as soon as the particular trouble which caused the prolongation had ceased to exist. Two years subsequently to the evacuation, England was to give up the control of the Egyptian army, which she had hitherto exercised, and happily still exercises, by filling all the higher posts in the Egyptian army by officers "seconded" from the ranks of the British army. If occasion should arise, Turkey was to have the right and duty of sending troops to Egypt to defend the Khedivial

Government against invasion or insurrection, but in this case England reserved to herself the power of taking part in any armed intervention on the part of Turkey. The Great Powers were also to be invited, on the conclusion of the Convention, to recognize and guarantee the neutrality of Egypt. The real gist of the Convention lay in the fact that it established formally the provisional character of the British occupation; that it fixed a positive date at an early period for the withdrawal of our troops; and that it distinctly recognized the right of Turkey, as the Suzerain Power, to take upon herself, under certain probable contingencies, the military occupation of Egypt.

One would have said beforehand that, as in respect of Egypt, the one desire of France was, and is, to get England out of the country, and that of Turkey was, and is, to get back into the country, these two Powers would certainly have welcomed the Wolff-Mukhtar Convention. Happily for England, this anticipation was not realized. As soon as the terms of the Convention were made public, there was an outcry in France that it contained no recognition of her exceptional interest in Egypt, while it studied the susceptibilities of England by leaving a door open for a joint military occupation with Turkey, in which France was not even invited to take a part. The French Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed, in conjunction with his Russian colleague, to bring pressure to bear on the Porte, to secure

the rejection of the Convention. Ever since the Russo-Turkish war, Russian authority has been supreme on the Bosphorus, and the mere intimation that the Czar did not wish the Convention signed would have been sufficient to cause the Sultan to refuse his signature, even if the intimation had not been accompanied—according to current report—by a statement that, if the Convention were accepted, Russia would deem herself entitled to occupy Turkish Armenia. The Sultan, as usual, gave way, and proposed to England to withdraw the Convention, which Mukhtar Pasha had signed as his Majesty's Plenipotentiary, and to enter on negotiations for the conclusion of a fresh Convention, more in accordance with Turkish interests—a phrase which really signified more acceptable to Russia and to France. The refusal of the Sultan to sign the Convention was formally announced on the 14th of July, 1887, and on the following day Sir Drummond Wolff left Constantinople, whither he had returned from Cairo in order to secure the ratification of his Convention by the Porte. Died stillborn is the only epitaph that can be rightly employed with reference to the defunct Anglo-Turkish Convention. I suspect the more one studies history, the more one finds that the success which attends certain nations at certain periods is due far more to what, for want of a better term, we call good luck, than to any special judgment and wisdom on the part of the nation so favoured. Whether this theory holds good or not as a general rule, it certainly holds good in

regard to our relations with Egypt. We went there against the will of our Government; we were detained there against our wishes; we made repeated efforts to get quit of our connection with Egypt, and time after time we were baffled by circumstances over which we had no control. If the Wolff-Mukhtar Convention had been ratified, we should long ago have quitted Egypt, and, having once quitted it, we could never have regained the position we then occupied, and still occupy, by no merit of our own. With the abandonment of this position, the whole system of British supervision, under which we have made Egypt solvent, prosperous, and progressive, would have fallen to pieces like a house of cards. This, from an Imperialist point of view, would have been a calamity for Egypt, as well as for England. Of course, people who have no faith in, or sympathy with, England's Imperial mission, may hold that it would have been better for the world at large if England had quitted Egypt. Granted their premises, I cannot dispute their conclusions. But when I see it stated, as I do often, not only by Continental critics, but by Little Englanders at home, that the policy of England in Egypt has been actuated by a greedy desire to add the valley of the Nile to the dominions of the British Empire, I may fairly ask how they reconcile this contention with the patent fact that England, under a Conservative, as well as under a Liberal Government, went out of her way, time after time, to cut

short her occupation of Egypt, and, having succeeded in wilfully tying her own hands, was only set free from her self-imposed obligations by the jealousy of France. In saying this, I have no wish to deny that France had grounds for resenting our supremacy in a country which at one time was completely under French influence. My complaint is not that France objected to our occupation of Egypt, but that her policy in this, as in other matters, was dictated by prejudice, not by common sense.

To illustrate my meaning, let me recall an incident, which seems to me to explain much in the character of French foreign policy that would otherwise be unintelligble. Somewhere about this period an eminent French politician came to me, as a publicist, and requested my co-operation in a project which, as he asserted, would secure peace to the world. His contention was, that Europe could never be really at peace so long as Germany and France remained armed for war; that the two countries could never be reconciled so long as Alsace and Lorraine remained German provinces; and that therefore Germany should be called upon by England, Austria, Russia, and Italy, to allow Alsace and Lorraine to be converted into a neutral independent State, which would act as a buffer between herself and France. Being anxious to avoid giving offence, I contented myself with pointing out that even if Germany surrendered the fruit of her hard-won victories sooner than confront an hostile

European coalition, the proposed State would be of too small dimensions to constitute an effective military barrier between two powerful Empires. This objection was answered as follows:—

"It goes without saying that Germany would have to allow the left bank of the Rhine to be incorporated in the new neutral State; otherwise, France would never be satisfied with the arrangement proposed."

In other words, France, according to my informant, who knew her well, would attach little value to the emancipation of her lost provinces from German rule, unless this emancipation was effected in such a way as to inflict an humiliation upon Germany. If this is so, it is intelligible why France has repeatedly refused to avail herself of various opportunities to secure England to withdraw from Egypt, because the mode of our withdrawal was one which we could have accepted without humiliation. As a matter of fact, England owes her present commanding position in Egypt more to the susceptibility of France than to any other single cause.

THE DERVISH INVASION OF EGYPT

Anticipations of Dervish raid on Egypt—Advance delayed by sudden death of the Mahdi—Abdullah el Taashi becomes ruler of the Soudan as Khalifa—Battle of Toski—Rout of Dervishes—Cessation of active hostilities between the Soudan and Egypt.

FROM the day when the British forces begun to withdraw from the Soudan, the Mahdi commenced his preparations for the invasion of Egypt. He was too wise, however, to give any outward sign, until the bulk of the British troops, sent out in order to rescue Gordon, had actually quitted Egypt. Then, as I have mentioned, on the eve of his advance northwards, he died suddenly. Had he lived, the ultimate outcome of the great raid he contemplated would probably have been the same; but the struggle, I think, would have been far more severe. Throughout the villages of Lower Egypt, and even in the towns where the European and Christian elements are most powerful, a belief in the approaching triumph of the Mahdi prevailed widely amidst the native population. If this was the case in the parts of Egypt dominated by European influences, it is easy to understand how much greater must have been the prestige of

his name amongst the fanatical tribes of the Soudan. In the East, even more than elsewhere, nothing succeeds like success; and, according to Arab ideas, the Mahdi had triumphed all along the line in his contests with the despised Egyptians and their infidel allies. His victories were in themselves proofs to the Arab mind that he was in very truth what he professed to be—the Mahdi, the new Messiah, appointed by Allah to restore the true faith of Islam and to drive the Giaour beyond the seas. Even now very little is known of the inner history of the Soudan during the period when it was cut off from Egypt. The native scouts and spies, who brought intelligence from the Soudan to the Government at Cairo, were certain, after the wont of Orientals, to have framed their reports, not so much with the object of telling the truth as of giving news likely to gratify their employers. I suspect, therefore, the reports current in official circles at Cairo about this time—of the Mahdi's authority being on the wane, of his being discredited by leading a life inconsistent with his claims to sanctity, and of his power being paralyzed by personal rivalries and tribal feuds—though they may have had some foundation in fact, were grossly exaggerated in transmission. However this may be, it is obvious that the Mahdi, up to the time of his death, exercised a personal mastery over the Soudan, which he was unable to transmit to his successor. In many of the narratives which have been published of late years, concerning the Soudan, this successor,

Abdullah el Taashi, is described as the Mahdi. I doubt the appellation being correct. He was the Khalifa, or Commander of the Faithful; but there seems very little evidence that he regarded himself, or was regarded by his people, as being a Mahdi in any other sense than that in which this title may be applied to any devout follower of the Prophet. He doubtless inspired terror by his force of will and cruelty of character, but the evidence of facts seems to show that he never commanded the fanatical enthusiasm possessed by his predecessor. There is cause to imagine that the Khalifa's gross licentiousness, his lust of blood, his barbarous and vindictive treatment of all who stood in his way or excited his suspicion, and his greed of wealth, outraged even the low standard of Soudanese morality. This much is certain, that, from the time of the Mahdi's death, the insurrection seems somehow to have lost its original impetus. The last great success achieved by the Dervishes was the capture of Kassala by Osman Digma, which occurred within a few days of Abdullah el Taashi, as a kinsman of the deceased Mahdi, becoming the Khalifa.

It seems probable that the wish to consolidate his newly acquired power led the Khalifa to accelerate the advance on Egypt before his preparations were fully completed. The advance begun early in August, and apparently encountered no serious opposition till it had passed Dongola. The difficulties of marching a large body of troops, under the most favourable

conditions, through the valley of the Upper Nile, are shown by the fact that the Dervish army took nearly three months in reaching Abou Hamed. Very little intelligence as to the progress of the enemy was received at Cairo—a circumstance which, I take it, is due partly to the sympathies of the Soudanese population being on the side of the Dervishes, and even more to the popular dread of incurring the displeasure of the Khalifa. Still, the fact that the Dervishes were advancing upon Lower Egypt was known in Cairo soon after the expedition had started, and the British military authorities came at once to the conclusion that the Dervishes must not be allowed to advance north of Wady Halfa. The army of occupation was strengthened by the despatch of two additional battalions. Forts, which, since then, have fallen into ruins, were erected to defend Assouan. It is strange to any one sojourning nowadays at that pleasant health resort, or inspecting the colossal dam now in the course of construction across the Nile by British enterprise and British capital, to reflect that, only sixteen years ago, the inhabitants of the town were watching day by day for the arrival of the victorious Dervishes, who were about, in the name of Islam, to drive the English out of Egypt.

Meanwhile, an army of some 5000 English and Egyptian troops, the former under the command of General Sir Frederick Stephenson, the latter under that of the Sirdar, Sir Francis Grenfell, had been collected round and about Wady Halfa, and were

finally marched to Kosheh. On the 29th of December, 1886, the enemy were attacked by our troops, driven out of their camp at Ginnis, and, after a short and sharp engagement, were completely routed. The loss on our side was extremely small; that on the side of the enemy very heavy. The battle of Ginnis, however, is memorable in itself, partly because it stemmed the tide of the insurrection, still more because it showed that, under British officers, the Egyptian troops could overcome the terror which had hitherto rendered them utterly useless as against the Dervishes; and, most of all, because it shook the belief of the Soudanese that, by sheer courage and contempt of death, they could more than hold their own against British soldiery. If rewards in war, as elsewhere, were regulated solely by the value of the services rendered, General Stephenson and General Grenfell should by rights have had fuller recognition of their merits than that which has been accorded to many men who have done far less both for England and for Egypt.

It was no want of good-will on the part of the British military authorities in Egypt which hindered this success from being pushed forward. The Dervishes were disheartened by their defeat at Ginnis, and if the tactics I have mentioned, as recommended by Ismail Pasha, had been adopted, an attempt would have been made at once to advance the Egyptian frontier southwards to Dongola. In obedience, however, to the policy of non-intervention, still maintained by the British Government, nothing was done, and the

Dervishes were allowed time to recover their strength. Shortly after the battle of Ginnis, the Khalifa was occupied for some months in suppressing a local insurrection which had occurred in Kordofan, and also in carrying on a sort of tribal warfare between the Baggaras—a tribe to which both he and the Mahdi belonged—and other Soudanese tribes, who resented the special favour shown at Khartoum to the Baggaras. For the purpose of this narrative, it is sufficient to say that there were various raids during the three following years, all directed with the view of forcing the position held by the Anglo-Egyptian forces at Wady Halfa. The story of all these raids is much the same. The Dervishes were unable to quit the banks of the Nile for any length of time, owing to the impossibility of finding water and forage for a large body of troops, except in the close vicinity of the narrow strips of cultivated land, which in this part of the Nile lie between the river and the desert. The consequence was that their advance northwards was barred by the garrison of Wady Halfa. All the stubborn courage and reckless gallantry of the Dervishes proved unavailing against the dead weight of the Egyptian gun-boats and artillery, which, under the direction of British officers, and with the co-operation of British troops, held the road leading to Egypt. The last of these raids was terminated by the victory of Toski, in which the Anglo-Egyptian army, supported as usual by regular British troops, inflicted a crushing defeat on the Dervishes led by Wad-el-Nijami,

the Khalifa's chief lieutenant. It is worth noting that, in as far as I can discover, the Khalifa himself never took part in the raids which he directed against Egypt. After the battle of Toski, in August, 1889, no further serious attempt was made to invade Egypt, while on the other hand, no attempt was made by the Egyptian Government, under British control, to move the frontier of Egypt further southwards. For nearly seven years there was a sort of armed truce, if I may use the word, between Egypt and the Soudanese Government installed at Khartoum under Abdullah el Taashi.

EGYPT UNDER BRITISH SUPERVISION

Apparent indifference of Egypt to the Soudanese campaigns—Rigid economy introduced into the administration of Egypt under British control—Reconstruction of native army—Divergences of view between Nubar Pasha and Sir Evelyn Baring—Resignation of Nubar Pasha—Estimate of Nubar's policy.

PERSONS who, like myself, knew Cairo during the years when the Dervishes were trying to force their way down the Nile valley, and would have succeeded in their attempt, had it not been for the British occupation, cannot fail to have been struck by the apparent indifference of the Egyptians to the frontier war which was being waged on their behalf. According to the British point of view, we were fighting the campaign of Ginnis in the interest of Egypt. From the Egyptian point of view, we were fighting it simply and solely in our own interest. The Egyptians, with very rare exceptions, were convinced that we had no object or motive in making war upon the Khalifa other than a desire to consolidate our mastery over Lower Egypt. This conviction was confirmed by the accident that the period of the frontier campaigns coincided with the

era in which British supervision over the civil administration of Egypt was first brought into active execution.

The financial difficulties of the country had been removed for the time being by the loan of £9,000,000, to which I have already alluded. To avoid the recurrence of similar embarrassments, the first duty of the Government was, according to British ideas, to keep the public expenditure within the public revenue. This end, as the British authorities conceived—and, I think, justly conceived—could only be effected by introducing regularity and economy into all departments of the administration. It was obvious that the simplest, if not the sole, way of inducing native administrators to replace disorder by order and extravagance by economy was for the British authorities in Egypt to exercise a direct supervision over every department of the State by the agency of British officials, responsible in name to the Egyptian Government, but in reality responsible to their own Government, as represented by our Consul-General. Whenever any questions upon the subject of our intervention in the civil affairs of Egypt were asked of the British Government, the interrogator was told that the aim of our intervention was to create a native public service competent to carry on the administration, in accordance with European principles, after our troops had quitted Egypt, and thus to prepare the country for the independence we were anxious to restore to her. I have never doubted the

sincerity of our Government in making declarations to the above effect. But I am convinced that the policy thus adopted was one certain to frustrate the intentions of its authors.

Up to the present day we have maintained the fiction that the British officials in the Egyptian service are only coadjutors of the native Ministers, and that their sole duty is to give the benefit of their experience in the form of advice. As a matter of fact, from the days when the British officials assumed their functions, they became the real administrators, and their native colleagues were reduced to the position of subordinates. Taking into account the racial characteristics of the British and native officials, and the exceptional conditions of a country under military occupation, no other result could have been anticipated. A number of active-minded, able British administrators—imbued with a desire to introduce reforms and to abolish abuses, indifferent to local prejudices, careless of local interests, deeming it their duty to set things straight, and conscious that by so doing they would promote their own repute and advancement—could not reasonably be expected to allow their energies to be hampered and thwarted by the intense conservatism, the hatred of change, and the innate dislike to reform, which characterize the Oriental.

I shall have something more to say on this matter when I endeavour to sum up the net results of our unavowed Protectorate. For the present, it is enough

to state that, under British supervision, which is only another name for British control, the reorganization of the various departments of the Egyptian State made rapid progress.

The first and most noteworthy of our reforms was the reconstruction of the native army. Up to the time of the battle of Ginnis, this army was looked upon with contempt by the outside world, and had lost all self-respect. Under the Sirdarship of Sir Evelyn Wood, the foundation was laid of the army, which, later on, played an important part in defeating the Khalifa, and restoring Egyptian rule in the Soudan. The organization of the native army was accomplished under every species of discouragement and opposition. In Egypt there were very few residents, either native or foreign, who believed in the possibility of ever converting Egyptian soldiers into an effective military force. The Khedive himself despaired of success. I remember about this period having an interview with Tewfik, in which he expressed his utter disbelief as to the possibility of our making good soldiers out of the fellaheen. He was influenced, no doubt, by the low opinion of the Egyptians, in a military capacity, entertained by all Turks. He was also biased, too, by his recollection of the Arabi mutiny, and of the way in which he had been deserted and betrayed by his own Egyptian soldiers. But I could not question his sincerity when he wound up his remarks by saying, "You English are wasting your time and your money in trying to raise a native fellaheen army. However well your

officers treat and drill them, they will never become soldiers. It is not in their nature." I am bound to add that the opinions expressed by his Highness were those of the great majority of his subjects. The only persons who believed in the reorganization of the Egyptian army under British control were the British officers, by whom the control was exercised. Their first step towards reform was to place all important posts in the military administration in their own hands. By so doing, they removed to a great extent the oppression and corruption under which the rank and file had hitherto suffered. They rendered the lot of the private soldier comparatively enviable, and did a great deal to reconcile the fellahs to compulsory service. In this way they succeeded in creating an army which, to say the least, has been able, when commanded by British officers, to hold its own in action. Whether this army could stand the same test under native officers, is a question for the future to decide. Between the British and the native officers there stand, not only the differences of rank and pay, but the still more insuperable differences of race, religion, and language, and, save in a very few exceptional instances, there are no intimate social relations between the former and the latter.

The second and most successful of the reforms initiated at this period was the reconstruction of the Treasury. Sir Evelyn Baring, who, from the time of his return to Egypt as Consul-General and Minister Plenipotentiary, took the lead in all questions

affecting the British occupation, laid it down as the guiding principle of his policy that Egypt must henceforth make both ends meet. In order to effect this end, the system by which the public accounts were kept had to be simplified, so as to render it possible to ascertain under what heads of expenditure savings could best be made. Hitherto the Coptic clerks, who were exclusively employed at the Treasury, had, partly in obedience to instructions, partly in accordance with their own peculiar system of book-keeping, so complicated the records of receipts and expenditure, that it was impossible to make out under what heads the receipts and expenses of the various departments should rightly be charged. Under Mr. (now Sir) Gerald Fitzgerald, who had been granted leave of absence from his post in the Indian Treasury, the accounts of Egypt were placed on a sound footing. In a comparatively short time Mr. Fitzgerald, with the aid of European assistants, introduced an intelligible system of accounts into the Egyptian Treasury, under which no wholesale peculation could pass without detection, while the cost of every particular department of the public service could not be falsified to any considerable extent. A committee was appointed, consisting of Mr. Edgar Vincent, who had succeeded Mr. Auckland Colvin as financial adviser; of Mr. Gerald Fitzgerald; of Blum Pasha, an Austrian financier of great ability, who is now manager of the Länder Bank at Vienna; and of Riaz Pasha. This committee, acting on the lines

laid down by Sir Evelyn Baring, devoted its efforts to cutting down all needless expenditure, to reducing all grants and salaries on which reduction was possible, and to bringing the total expenditure of the year within the year's income. Every official, from the Governor of a province down to the Sheik of the humblest village, had been taught to believe that it was impossible to uphold his authority unless he had the power to claim irregular largesses out of the public funds which passed through his hands, and from these largesses to reward his subordinates for services rendered, or supposed to have been rendered, in the interest of the Administration. In consequence, the native officials—even those who were most enlightened and least open to suspicion in respect of integrity—resented bitterly the reign of economy established under British control. It was not only that they suffered by it in their own pockets, but that they felt their importance to be diminished and their authority to be impaired amidst their neighbours. What made their resentment the greater was that the system in question was introduced by foreigners, and that it was justified on the alleged necessity of providing for the regularity of payments due for the most part to foreign creditors.

Popular dissatisfaction was, moreover, aggravated, however unreasonably, by the fact that the self-same foreigners who cut down expenditure right and

left, received salaries, paid out of the Egyptian Treasury, which were very largely in excess of the ordinary remuneration accorded to the native-born officials.

Principles of economy were applied, under British control, to all departments of the State. Everywhere Europeans, chiefly English, were placed in positions of authority, which rendered the native heads of departments, though nominally their superiors, in reality their inferiors. I fully appreciate the benefits, moral as well as material, which British supervision has conferred on Egypt; but I doubt whether our reforms, however useful in themselves, have done much to render Egypt better fitted to govern herself under an independent native administration. For my own part, I do not think it is for the interest of England, or of Egypt, that the Egyptians should become independent within any period which enters into the domain of practical politics. But if I thought such a consummation was desirable, I should say the method adopted, of training Egypt to self-government by placing every department of the public service under British control, was singularly ill-adapted to effect the end desired.

The new system of administration under British supervision was unpopular, not only with the partisans of the old order of things, under which the country was ruled by alternate doses of kurbash and backsheish, but with the small section of natives,

who honestly desired to see Egypt governed by a law-abiding and enlightened administration. Both the Khedive and his Prime Minister, Nubar Pasha, considered that, under British supervision, they were deprived of the authority and influence essential to the good government of the country. Nubar's idea had undoubtedly been that Egypt required to be under the protection of some great European Power, and that the Power best fitted for this position was England. Up to the last, he never wavered in this conviction ; but he also never hesitated to express his opinion that it would have been better for England, as well as for Egypt, if England's intervention in the internal administration of Egypt had been indirect instead of direct. What he had hoped was, that England would be content to leave the details of administration entirely in the hands of native Ministers, assisted by European experts, who might lay down the general principles on which Egypt should be administered, but who would leave the mode in which these principles should be carried out in practice to native officials, under the control of a native Prime Minister, whose duty it should be to see that the interests of England suffered no injury, and that in the main the country was governed in accordance with British ideas of justice and order. This conception was manifestly incompatible with the system of rigid economy and the strict audit of all public receipts and expenditures which the British authorities, acting on the instructions of Sir Evelyn

Baring, had resolved to set on foot, in order to enable Egypt to escape International intervention, which must have been the inevitable result of her making default in the payments due to her creditors. Apart from Nubar's political objections to foreigners taking a leading part in the administration of his country, petty economies and strict audits were things eminently distasteful to the Oriental side of Nubar's character. In public, as well as in private, affairs he held strong views about the expediency of liberality as a matter of policy. He contended that small economies created an amount of popular dissatisfaction, which more than counterbalanced the value of any slight increase in the revenues of the State. He contended, further, that in order to render the British occupation acceptable to Egypt, it was essential to make its material benefits manifest to the native population, and that this could only be done by a liberal expenditure on public works. In his opinion, the risk of foreign intervention would cease to exist if England were either to consent to guarantee the Egyptian Debt, or to make it understood that she would not permit of any outside interference with the financial affairs of a country occupied by her troops. It must also be allowed that the policy of England in respect to Egypt at this period would have tried the patience of Job. It was, as I have stated, by the advice and instruction of the British Government that Nubar Pasha gave orders that funds set apart for the service of the Debt should

be paid directly into the Treasury, instead of into the *Caisse de la Dette.* Yet, when this was done, and was met by a protest on the part of the Continental Powers, England gave way at once, and compelled the Egyptian Ministry to cancel their orders.

"I have"—Nubar has often said to me—"to assume the responsibility for a policy which I did not originate, and often did not approve. If the policy succeeded, the British authorities in Egypt claimed the credit. If it failed, it was I who bore the blame."

I do not believe myself that at this, or any later period, Nubar ever seriously tried, or even wished, to get rid of the British occupation. But he did undoubtedly wish to modify its character in the way I have already indicated. The chief champion of the direct administration of the country by British officials was our Consul-General. In consequence, two very masterful wills came into conflict; and even if Sir Evelyn Baring had been a far less able man than he is, his will must inevitably have won the day, having, as he had, and has still, the army of occupation at his back. To my own knowledge, Nubar appealed to the British Government to allow himself and his fellow-Ministers wider authority than that which they possessed under the system of administration favoured by our Consul-General, and stated that if a higher independence of administrative action were not accorded to him, he must resign his

post. Shortly before leaving London for Egypt, in 1885, I had an interview with Lord Granville, who kindly asked me to write to him as to the political situation in Egypt. I availed myself of this suggestion. I wrote a letter to his Lordship at Nubar's request, stating his views with regard to the internal administration of the country, which were undoubtedly at variance with the views entertained by the British officials in Egypt. The letter probably exists in the archives of the Foreign Office, and I have some reason to think its contents were most properly communicated to our representative in Egypt. Nubar was far too shrewd not to realize that this must be the case, and he never would have urged me to send the letter in question, which, I was authorized to state, had been read and approved by him, unless he had been prepared for its contents being known not only in Downing Street, but in the British Agency in Cairo. At the time when I wrote, I was at a loss to understand why Nubar should have supposed the Government at home was at all likely to espouse his policy in preference to that of their representative in Egypt. My explanation, judging by the light of subsequent events, is that at this period he entertained very serious doubts as to whether England was prepared to prolong her occupation, while he entertained no doubt at all, that, if our troops were to be withdrawn, his reputation of being a partisan of England would prove an obstacle to his future political career, unless he had placed on record a formal

protest against the administration of Egypt by British officials.

Up to this time our Protectorate over Egypt had brought us nothing but trouble and annoyance, and Nubar, who was a very keen and close observer of English politics, and who had no very exalted opinion of British statesmanship, thought that England was beginning to count the cost of intervention in Egypt, and was anxious, in mercantile phraseology, to cut the loss. In this impression he was confirmed by the negotiations initiated through Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, to which I have referred before, for the conclusion of an Anglo-Turkish Convention. If these negotiations meant anything, they were evidence that the British Government were trying to find a means of withdrawing our troops from Egypt. The particular form by which Sir Henry proposed to facilitate the evacuation of Egypt was equally distasteful to the Khedive and his Prime Minister, though on different grounds. Tewfik Pasha, though a Turk by descent, and a devout Mussulman, resented, as the descendant of Mahomet Ali, any measures which seemed calculated to replace Egypt under the authority of Turkey. It so happened that, just at this time, Ismail Pasha had been invited to reside at Constantinople, and had been received there with great apparent favour by the Sultan. Tewfik Pasha was convinced that his father hoped, through the influence of the Porte, to return to Egypt. Mukhtar Pasha and his English fellow-commissioner

were suspected at Abdin of being in favour of Ismail's restoration to the Vice-regal throne. In view of such a contingency, the Khedive was naturally anxious to assert his authority, and to free himself from the reproach of being a mere puppet in the hands of England. Nubar, at the same time, was hostile to the precedence claimed by the British officials in the administration of the country. Thus both his Highness and his Prime Minister had a common interest in clearing themselves at this period from the supposition that they approved of the policy pursued by England in regard to Egypt; and this fact brought them into more intimate and friendly relations than had previously existed between the Khedive and the Premier. The collapse of the Convention preceded by a few weeks the death of Valentine Baker, who held the office of head of the police. Thereupon, Nubar, with the approval of his Highness, proposed that the successor to Baker should be a native; that the British officers in the police force should be dismissed; and that the duty of maintaining order, not only in the capital, but in the provinces, should be entrusted, as in former days, to the local native authorities. If this proposal had been made some months earlier, while the negotiations with Turkey were thought likely to succeed, it might have had some chance of success. But when Turkey, acting under the influence of France and Russia, had rejected the Wolff-Mukhtar Convention, our Government at last realized the truth, that our occupation of Egypt could not

be terminated in any way consistent with British interests, and that our stay there must be prolonged indefinitely. They also came to the conclusion that the administration of the country by British officials was the only way in which we could carry on the system of administrative control, which was, in their opinion, the necessary corollary of our military occupation. The demand that the control of the police should be transferred from British to Egyptian officials, met with a peremptory refusal from our Foreign Office, once more presided over by Lord Salisbury; and the Khedive was given clearly to understand, that in all matters of importance he must follow the advice given him by our Consul-General, as the official representative of the British Government. Tewfik, not unnaturally, considered himself aggrieved by the rebuff to which he had exposed himself by Nubar's advice. The relations between the Khedive and the Minister became strained; and in June, 1888, Nubar was called on to resign, and was succeeded by Riaz Pasha.

It was my opinion at the time—it is my opinion still—that in this conflict between two policies, rather than between two personalities, each had a strong case of their own, but that Nubar's was the strongest in theory, while Sir Evelyn Baring's was the stronger in practice. If England could only have made up her mind to declare a Protectorate over Egypt after the suppression of the Arabi mutiny, or after the

repulse of the Dervish invasion, she might have treated Egypt as we treat the native States in India. Had we done so, we should have saved ourself an infinity of complications, and should have established a system of government far more in accordance with Oriental ideas and interests than the system of to-day, under which every administrative department is virtually under the control of British officials. Unfortunately, as I have endeavoured to show, our Government repudiated the idea of any permanent Protectorate, and sought to justify the indefinite prolongation of our military occupation by the plea that we could not leave Egypt till we had reorganized her institutions on such a basis as to secure her immunity from external attack or from internal disturbance after the departure of our troops. The maintenance of this plea involved the necessity of our actively undertaking the work of reorganization. We soon learnt, as our Indian experience ought to have taught us, that the reorganization of an Eastern country, in accordance with British ideas, could only be conducted satisfactorily under the direct control of British officials. Thus the establishment of a system of British supervision, or, in other words, of a native Administration acting under the orders of British officials, was imposed upon us by the logic of facts. This system was in exact antagonism to that which Nubar had expected us to adopt, and which we might, under other conditions, have adopted with advantage to ourselves and to Egypt—that of leaving

the internal administration of the country in native hands, and relying on the supreme authority of a Resident to see that the power entrusted to the native Administration was not seriously abused. Under such a system, Nubar would have been an ideal head of the native Administration. Conscious of his own ability, he felt keenly his enforced submission to the authority of British officials, who, whatever their other merits, were comparatively unacquainted with the social, economical, and religious conditions of the country they had to administer. "The curse of the granted prayer" weighed upon Nubar, as it does upon so many of us, who find that the realization of our life's desire has brought about an entirely different result from that we anticipated. For the time he was undoubtedly embittered against the representatives of British officialdom in Egypt. Indeed, the chief satisfaction which he derived from his first Premiership after the occupation was that he had succeeded, with Lord Cromer's active support, in abolishing the corvée, and thus enabling the fellaheen to bestow their own labour upon their own lands. The fellaheen are far too alive to their own interests not to be aware that when, as often must happen, a flaw occurs in the complicated system of irrigation upon which Egypt, literally speaking, depends for her existence, compulsory labour to repair the flaw is absolutely indispensable. To the corvée, therefore, when enforced compulsorily in order to secure a constant supply of water, they entertained no objection.

But they objected to the corvée when resorted to —as it was in the old days—in order to work the lands or dig the canals of the Vice-regal families or of the Pashas and large landowners who stood well with the Government. The hatred entertained by the fellaheen for the corvée would, with a less long-suffering population, have led to open resistance. Even if our troops were to leave Egypt, and the old order of things were re-established, as it infallibly would be, the reintroduction of the corvée would be the last measure to which any native Government would venture to resort. That this is so, is mainly due to the influence of Nubar Pasha.

With the termination of Nubar's Premiership the idea of administering Egypt by native officials, acting under British supervision, was finally abandoned. The system which Nubar advocated of employing native judges to administer justice had been tried, and had, to say the least, proved unsatisfactory. The administration of justice was henceforth placed mainly in European hands. From this period the internal government of the country passed entirely under the control of the Power whose troops maintained order within its frontiers, and protected Egypt from external attack by virtue of their presence on Egyptian soil. It is only fair to say that this truth was not recognized at the time even by the British authorities in Egypt. Looking back, however, on the past, it is easy to see that the substitution of

direct for indirect British control dates from the period when the Khedive, with the acquiescence of England, dismissed the one Egyptian statesman who might conceivably have tried the experiment of administering Egypt by native agency under British supervision.

POSITION OF TEWFIK AFTER THE MUTINY

Tewfik's attitude towards England—French influence with his Highness causes him to be suspicious of British policy—Explanation of the hostile disposition of France—Riaz retires from Premiership owing to his opposition to legal reforms—Project for establishment of German chartered Company in the Soudan—Death of Tewfik.

TEWFIK, on his restoration to the throne, only accepted the British occupation as a painful necessity. Even the knowledge that he owed his restoration, if not his life, to the suppression of the Arabi insurrection by England, was outweighed by his resentment at the mode in which England had prevented his inflicting any adequate punishment on the leaders of the military mutiny, and had thereby deprived him of the opportunity of recovering the authority to which he held himself entitled as the Effendina, the Lord and Master. At the time of his accession he had little or no experience of public life; he was probably more ignorant than the bulk of Oriental princes of any country outside his own, and had little notion of the relative position and attitude of the foreign States with whom he was brought into contact. He had little of the quick intelligence of his father, or of his faculty of understanding the policy of

foreign countries, as influenced by their interests, jealousies, and ambitions. Owing to his distrust of his father, and to his lack of cordial sympathy with his brothers, he had not at his service any intimate adviser on whom he could rely with confidence; and, in common with all persons called upon to administer affairs of which they have no personal knowledge, he was at times unduly credulous; at others, unduly suspicious. Moreover, he entertained a not altogether unjust conviction that all the persons with whom he came into official relations had interests in view which, more often than not, were in conflict with his own. He had, however, the great qualities of common sense, and of an honest desire to do the best for himself and his country in a position of extreme difficulty. He was comparatively free, also, from the French proclivities which had often biased the judgment of his predecessor on the throne. At heart, I suspect, he had no liking for foreigners; but of foreigners he disliked the English the least. The reasons for this preference are obvious. In the first place, he was convinced that England desired to maintain him upon the throne, while he could place no reliance in this desire being shared by any other of the leading European Powers. He was, indeed, shaken in his confidence in Great Britain at the time of our negotiations with Turkey; but when these negotiations fell to the ground, his confidence was restored. He bitterly resented the enforced evacuation of the Soudan, but when he saw that England felt it her duty to protect

Egypt from a Dervish invasion, he was shrewd enough to see that this evacuation could only be a temporary measure. In the second place, he was not slow in recognizing that the British officials in Egypt, however much he might dislike their presence or disapprove of their policy, were developing the material resources of Egypt, and were restoring her financial credit. In the third place, there was a good deal in our English character, as compared with that of other foreign nations, which appealed to him, as it does for the most part to all devout Mahometans, especially of Turkish race. He found us, as a body, truthful and honest, not open to corrupt influences, and genuinely anxious to do our duty to the employer in whose service we are engaged, even if that employer should be of a different race and creed from our own. He may not have liked us, but he certainly respected us, and he was not slow in discovering that the simplicity of his domestic life, his aversion for extravagant expenditure, and the sincerity of his belief in his own faith, enlisted British sympathy on his behalf. He devoted himself to the study of English, and learnt to speak it intelligibly, though not fluently. He had his two sons educated by an English tutor, Mr. Mitchell, who is now a Consular judge in Cyprus, and he showed himself extremely friendly to all English visitors to Cairo who, as in my case, took the trouble to seek his acquaintance. He had not the singular charm of manner which redeemed so many of Ismail's failings, but he impressed me as a man overburdened

somewhat by the sense of responsibilities to which he hardly felt himself equal, anxious to do his duty, amiable by disposition, and, though imbued with the belief that he was the servant of Allah, ready to acknowledge that men not belonging to his creed might be, nevertheless, honest in their beliefs. I remember calling on him about the time when there had been a series of personal attacks upon him in Parliament, as being disloyal to British interests and indifferent to the welfare of Egypt. In answer to his question as to what was the cause of these attacks, I told him that I attributed them to a desire, on the part of his assailants, to gain notoriety, and remarked in French, the language he always preferred speaking, "*C'est une Philippique contre votre Altesse.*" I had great doubts in my mind whether the Khedive had ever heard of Philip of Macedon, or of the diatribes directed against him by Demosthenes. But he caught the allusion at once, to my surprise, and replied, "*Vous avez raison, c'est le mot qu'il faut,*" and went on to tell me how glad he was to learn that the attacks in question were not the expression of popular sentiment in England. I recollect, too, about the same time, his telling me he had recently taken the opportunity of referring to the records of the French sojourn in Cairo under Marshal Kleber, and saying how much he was struck by the contrast between the French and the English occupations.

"When the French held the citadel, not a day passed without there being some charge brought of

outrage or assault upon the townspeople by soldiers of the army of occupation. Nowadays, any complaint of misconduct on the part of the British soldiery is a matter of the rarest occurrence. Nothing is more praiseworthy than the conduct of your troops."

From all I can learn, his Highness's appreciation of our English action in Egypt became more and more favourable as years went by; and though I do not believe he ever ceased to resent the occupation, I was convinced, long before his death, he had come to the conclusion that if there was to be an occupation at all, it could not be conducted by any Power, other than England, with so little harm and with so great benefits.

On Nubar's retirement, Riaz Pasha was re-called to the Premiership. In respect of what may be called material reforms, such as irrigation works, the retrenchment of expenditure, the introduction of a new and simple coinage, based on the decimal principle, and the restoration of the Barrage at the apex of the Delta below Cairo, Riaz, as Premier, gave a loyal support to the British officials. But in respect of what may be called moral reforms, such as that of the administration of justice, he was a staunch opponent. Nubar held, as strongly as the British officials, that the system of judicature was urgently in need of reform, though he objected strongly to the mode of its application. Riaz, on the other hand, objected altogether to legal reform, considered that the Mahometan courts sufficed for the administration of justice, and entertained the strongest dislike to any system under which

Mahometans, in a Mahometan country, were liable to be tried and punished, if convicted, by Christian judges. He consented reluctantly to a small increase in the number of European judges. But when the Khedive was called upon to appoint Sir John Scott, the late Chief Justice of Bombay, as Legal Adviser to the Egyptian Government, and when Sir John reported that the whole system of native judicature was most unsatisfactory, and could only be improved by filling all the principal posts in the administration of the law by European judges, Riaz opposed the report, and tried to excite popular opinion against its acceptance. Our Consul-General, however, supported the report in question, and Riaz thereupon resigned his office, and was succeeded by Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, a good type of the educated Egyptian official, somewhat after the fashion of Cherif Pasha, but not a man of any strong personal individuality. On that account, perhaps, he was all the better fitted to carry out a policy which is practically, though not nominally, directed in accordance with the instructions of the British Agency.

Throughout both the Premierships which intervened between Nubar's fall and the death of Tewfik, the war between the Dervishes and the Egyptian army, commanded by British officers and reinforced by British troops, continued to run its course without any very decisive results. A succession of raids by the Dervishes, with the view of forcing their way into Egypt, were repulsed with success. A number of

engagements were fought, and the net result of these campaigns may be stated as proving that, so long as the British occupation lasted, there was no possibility of the Dervishes forcing their way northwards even as far as Assouan. In the Eastern Soudan, Osman Digma sustained a series of defeats, which somehow never ended in his capture, or in the complete suppression of the insurrection of which he, as the Chief Lieutenant of the Khalifa, was the leader. On the other hand, in as far as the scanty news which filtered into Egypt from the Soudan could be relied upon, the Khalifa had strengthened his authority within the Soudan, had crushed out all internal opposition to his rule, and had established something approaching to a settled government throughout the vast region over which he ruled as the successor of the Mahdi. Seven years elapsed between the withdrawal of the British army from the Soudan, after the fall of Khartoum, and the death of Tewfik, and yet, notwithstanding the success which had attended our arms during the various Soudanese campaigns, not a single attempt had been made to carry out the policy recommended by Ismail Pasha, and to advance the Egyptian frontier step by step southwards of Wady Halfa. Repeated representations had been made by the Khedivial Government, urging the expediency of advancing upon Dongola and restoring this once fertile province to the rule of Egypt. But these representations had met with an unfavourable reception at the Foreign Office, alike under Liberal and Conservative Administrations

In Egypt, and on the Continent, the impression gained ground that England had no intention of ever assisting Egypt in the recovery of the Soudan.

I do not think people at home realized the dangers of this policy of non-intervention, based as it was upon the fallacy that the provinces bordering on the Upper and the Lower Nile could be regarded as distinct States, having no natural connection with one another. In connection with this remark, I may relate here an incident which came within my personal knowledge, and which illustrates the difficulties that might easily have arisen from our lack of foresight. During the period of Riaz's Ministry, my old friend, Sir Samuel Baker, called on me in London to ask for my co-operation in a project he had in view. He told me that, as a former Governor-General of the Soudan, he was deeply concerned with the fate of the provinces over which he had ruled, that he felt convinced, from the information he had received, that our own Government would do nothing to rescue the Soudan from the tyranny of the Dervishes, and that therefore he had looked about everywhere to see if no other agency could be discovered to save the Soudan from destruction. He further informed me that he had been in communication with German financiers at Berlin, who proposed to provide the funds necessary for the recovery of the Soudan. Their idea was that the German Government should allow a number of its officers to have leave of absence for service abroad; that these officers should enlist

and train an army of native soldiers, chiefly, I think, Nubians; that with this army an advance should be made upon Khartoum; that the cost of the expedition should be borne by the Berlin Syndicate; and that, in return for the money advanced, the German Government should grant the Syndicate a charter over any territory wrested from the Khalifa, analogous to that granted by the Government of England to the British South African Company. He proposed that I should accompany him to Berlin, to see whether the scheme would be taken up seriously. The project seemed to me at the outset utterly extravagant. But I saw that Sir Samuel was set on the proposal, and that, rightly or wrongly, he believed it to be serious. Indeed, he was, in as far as I could gather, under the impression that Prince Bismarck had been sounded on the matter, and had expressed himself as willing to give it his consideration, if the proposal could be submitted to him in a practical form. I then pointed out to Sir Samuel, that, even supposing there were no other objections to the project, it must, if successful, create great difficulties in the way of the British occupation of Egypt, of which we were both strong partisans; and that he, as an Englishman of high distinction, and as an old officer of the British army, could hardly take a prominent part in an enterprise whose object was to establish a German State at the junction of the White and Blue Niles. With his usual frankness he admitted the force of the objection, and said

that he should have no more to do with the matter. How far he had any solid ground for his assertion that the scheme in question was likely to meet with financial and political support in Germany, I have no means of saying. But it seems to me probable enough, from the anxiety Germany displayed about this period to get a footing in Africa, that such a proposal would have been given, to say the least, a favourable hearing. Only a few years later we were saved by good luck from France succeeding in an even wilder scheme, which, if successful, would have located a French State in the heart of the Soudan, and in command of the White Nile.

This much, however, must be allowed, that, if our hesitation to undertake the reconquest of the Soudan exposed both England and Egypt to serious risks, the avoidance of the expenditure, which would have been rendered necessary by active military operations, enabled Egypt, under Tewfik's reign, to recover her credit and to develop the extraordinary resources of her soil. In the five years preceding his death, the revenue of Egypt rose to close upon eleven millions sterling, in spite of the enormous reductions that had been made in taxation. Never had the country been so prosperous as it had proved under British supervision ; and the credit of this prosperity told in favour of the reigning Sovereign. Shortly before his death, he made a tour through the chief towns of Lower Egypt, and was received with an enthusiasm which, with his usual

plain, good sense, he probably assessed at its true value, as being a proof of his people's satisfaction at their own well-being, rather than as a tribute of gratitude to their Sovereign. However, to a Prince, who had had so small a share of the pleasures of Royalty as the late Khedive, any display of enthusiasm could not fail to be gratifying, and one may reasonably hope that the comparative comfort and peace of his later years made some atonement for the sufferings and humiliations he had had of necessity to undergo during the earlier years of his reign.

The death of Tewfik shared the sort of incompleteness which characterized his life. He had surmounted the chief obstacles which had hitherto stood in the way of his earning the recognition due to his sterling merits; he had acquired the confidence and respect of the officials, native as well as foreign, with whom he came into contact; and he had outlived the unpopularity which attached to him amongst his own people as a Sovereign maintained upon the throne by the presence of British troops. He was still in the prime of life; he enjoyed good health, and, it is believed, genuine domestic happiness; and then he died. In the early days of 1892, he had gone to his villa at Helouan, a favourite resort of his, which owed its first repute as a fashionable bathing-place to his patronage. While staying there he was attacked by a mild form of influenza, and three days later the news came that he was dead. All over the East, when a man of high rank or wealth dies suddenly, it

is always assumed that his death was accelerated by artificial causes. But in the case of Tewfik, I could never learn that there was the slightest foundation for such an assumption. It is stated that, owing to his dislike, so common with all Mahometans, to admit Giaours into their private apartments, he refused at first to consult any European doctor. It is said further, especially by European medical men residing in Cairo, that his life might have been saved, if their services had been employed. How this may be, I have no means of ascertaining. No outsider ever knows what goes on within the walls of an Oriental harem. All one can state is, that few Eastern rulers seemed less likely to have incurred the public or private enmities which have shortened the careers of so many Oriental sovereigns. In Tewfik, both Egypt and England lost a Prince, who had done them good service in the past, and might have done them better service yet in the future. After the custom of his dynasty, the palace wherein he died, which was left to his widow, remained unoccupied for many years, and was finally sold to a private purchaser. It is now converted into an hotel.

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THE ACCESSION OF ABBAS II.

Early education of Abbas II.—Was a student at Vienna when called to succeed his father on the throne—Surrounded at Vienna by influences unfriendly to England His formal investiture as Khedive insisted upon by the Sultan—Abbas II. proposes to make Tigrane Pasha Premier—Proposal vetoed by British authorities—Lord Rosebery informs Khedive that the British authorities must be consulted in his choice of his Ministers—Riaz Pasha appointed Premier—Khedive on a review of Egyptian army expresses disapproval of manœuvres as executed by troops—The Sirdar thereupon resigns—The Khedive has to withdraw his censure.

Amongst the many misfortunes caused to Egypt by the sudden and unforeseen death of Tewfik Pasha, not the least was his son's elevation to the Vice-regal throne, before he had attained full manhood or had completed his education. In the East, both sexes mature earlier than they do in the West, and by Oriental law and custom, he was entitled to succeed his father as Khedive without there being any cause for a Regency. There can, however, be no question that the course of study considered necessary, in his father's opinion, to fit him for his future career, had not been completed when he was called upon to reign. Tewfik, who was keenly alive to the

defects of his own imperfect education as a Prince, was resolved that his two sons should have no cause to reproach their father for not having given them the education best qualified to fit them for the high position that one, or both of them, might in the course of nature be called upon to occupy. Within a very few years of his own accession, the late Khedive had come, however reluctantly, to the conclusion that England was destined to remain the paramount Power in the valley of the Nile, and, acting on this conviction, he deemed it desirable that his sons should be familiar not only with the English language, but with English ideas and modes of thought. The first object was undoubtedly obtained by the engagement of an English tutor as soon as the young Princes were old enough to be taught foreign languages. Of the fluency they thus acquired in the English tongue, all those who had the pleasure of hearing his Highness speak at the Guildhall a year ago, are well aware. The second object was more difficult of attainment.

I suspect that if Tewfik Pasha had followed his own wishes, he would have sent his sons, as his brothers Prince Hassan and Prince Ibrahim had been sent by his father, to complete their education in England. But what was possible for an independent Sovereign, such as Ismail, was not possible for a Prince who held his throne subject to an unavowed British Protectorate. Tewfik was willing to accept the necessities of his position,

but he was not willing to confirm his acceptance formally by sending his sons to be educated in the country whose forces were in occupation of Egypt. Prince Abbas, therefore, instead of being sent to school and college in England, was sent in the first instance to Geneva, as a preparatory school for the Teresianum College at Vienna. During his holidays the Prince travelled a great deal on the Continent, and perfected his knowledge of French and German. The events of the last two years have taught us how hostile the general tone of Continental society is towards England; and it is intelligible enough that when Abbas Pasha was recalled from the Teresianum of Vienna, to become Khedive of Egypt, he should have returned to Cairo with a great bias against British rule, and with a strong desire to seize the first opportunity of asserting his independent authority.

The events which followed the arrival of the young Khedive to his native country tended, I fancy, to confirm him in the impression that England was not prepared to assume the responsibilities involved in the declaration of an avowed Protectorate. By the firman of 1866, the Sultan had granted direct succession to the Vice-regal throne to the Mahomet Ali dynasty. Tewfik was dead, and by the firman, Abbas, as his eldest son, became Khedive, as a matter of course, with which the Sultan had no more to do than he had with the elevation of the Prince of Wales to the throne of Great Britain upon the death of her

Majesty Queen Victoria. The Porte, however, contended that though Abbas had, in virtue of the firman, a legal right to be invested as Khedive, he could not actually become Khedive till after his investiture. This contention was not disputed in any effective manner by the British Government. It may be said, with truth, that the investiture was a mere formality; but formalities count for much in all Oriental lands. The Khedive was not prepared to dispute the Suzerainty of Turkey, and therefore he may well have thought if he could secure the support of his Suzerain, he might succeed in escaping the sort of thraldom in which he was held under the British military occupation.

Moreover, his Highness was surrounded, on his return to Egypt, by a number of advisers, who, partly from personal interest, partly from political motives, were opposed to the British occupation. These advisers were mainly French or Levantines, and comprised not a few of the Consular representatives at Cairo. The tenor of their advice was that the young Khedive ought to withstand any pretension on the part of the British authorities in Egypt to direct or supervise the internal administration of the country; that if he stood firm, the British Government would give way; and that in the event of any pressure being brought to bear upon him, he could rely on the support of the leading Continental Powers. I think myself the importance of these intrigues was somewhat underestimated at the outset by the British authorities in

Egypt. It is very difficult for all of us to realize the fact that young people, whom we knew till only a short time ago as children, have become grown-up men and women; and I suspect our authorities made the mistake of treating his Highness, even after he had come to the throne, as a lad too young to be consulted on matters of importance. A little more consideration in the early days of the Khedive's reign might, I fancy, have prevented the occurrence of untoward incidents, which, though they resulted in failure, in as far as their anti-British purpose was concerned, had for some time afterwards an unfortunate effect upon the relations between the Khedive and his British advisers.

Towards the close of the year in which Abbas became Khedive, Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, who had been Prime Minister under Tewfik Pasha, fell ill, and was supposed to be dying. It got noised abroad that, in the event of the Premiership becoming vacant, his Highness intended to confer the post on Tigrane Pasha, who had been for some time in close and intimate relations with the Vice-regal Court. To Tigrane, personally, no possible objection could have been raised. He was known as a rising politician in a country where political ability is extremely rare. Owing to the influence of his father-in-law, Nubar Pasha, he had already filled several subordinate Ministerial posts, and had discharged his duties with credit. He was an Armenian, who claimed to be descended from one of the historic royal families of Armenia; he was

English on his mother's side, and he was personally popular in the British society of Cairo. The sole objection to his being entrusted with high office lay in the fact that of late years he had identified himself with the so-called "Young Egypt" party, whose avowed aim and object was to get rid of the British occupation, and whose watchword was "Egypt for the Egyptians." The cry was a plausible one, and attracted a good deal of sympathy amongst those who, whether at home or abroad, disapproved of the British occupation. The "Young Egypt" party was composed almost exclusively of Levantine and Armenian Christians, who were only Egyptians by the accident of birth or residence, who had no following whatever amidst the native population; and who, if they had ever attained to office, would have been swept away as soon as they had succeeded in getting rid of the British occupation. Our Consul-General, who had recently been rewarded by the British Government for his great services in Egypt by being raised to the peerage as Lord Cromer, set his foot down at once, and informed the Khedive that Tigrane Pasha's appointment as Prime Minister could not be permitted by England. The Khedive gave way upon this point, but retorted by nominating to the post of Minister of Justice Fakri Pasha, who, under Fehmi Pasha's Ministry, had been compelled to resign his post as Minister of Justice on account of the vehement opposition he had

offered to the judicial reforms introduced by the British legal adviser of the Khedivial Government. This second appointment was practically vetoed by Lord Cromer, who was instructed by our Foreign Office, then under Lord Rosebery's administration, to inform his Highness "that in all important matters, such as the formation of his Ministries, he must act with the knowledge and approval of the British authorities." The Khedive found, to his surprise, that the only practical result of his having listened to the advice of his anti-British counsellors was an immediate increase of the army of occupation. In one sense, all's well that ends well. But it would have been better if British supremacy in Egypt could have been vindicated in a manner less galling to the pride of a young and ambitious Sovereign.

Finally, Riaz Pasha was nominated Prime Minister in the place of Fehmi Pasha. The appointment, in common with most compromises, satisfied neither party to the arrangement. The Khedive looked with disfavour on Riaz, because he was known to consider the British occupation, as possibly an evil, but certainly as a necessity, for Egypt. On the other hand, the British officials distrusted Riaz, because he was known to be hostile to British intervention in matters of internal administration.

Meanwhile the relations between the palace of Abdin and the Agency continued to be of a strained character. A French squadron was despatched to

Alexandria, and his Highness was thereby encouraged in the belief that France was prepared to support him in his attempt to free himself from the tutelage under which he was placed by the Power whose armies occupied his country. Shortly after his Highness had been refused permission to nominate his own Ministers without the approval of the British Government, he made a tour in Upper Egypt, and proceeded to Wady Halfa, the then frontier post of Egyptian territory. A review of the garrison, commanded by the Sirdar, General Kitchener, was held in his honour, and after the review was over, his Highness took occasion to express his dissatisfaction at the way in which the military manœuvres had been performed. What were the exact words of censure used by Abbas Pasha, has always been matter of dispute. There can, however, be no doubt that General Kitchener and his British brother officers considered at the time that his Highness intended to express his dissatisfaction with the state of the Egyptian forces under British command. To show his sense of the slight thus passed upon his troops, the Sirdar sent in his resignation on the spot. The Sirdar's interpretation of the Khedive's words was, I believe, substantially correct. Abbas II. was not unnaturally anxious to show Egypt and the outside world that, however his powers might be circumscribed by the British occupation, he was still master of his own army. It is intelligible enough, that being young, inexperienced, and surrounded by

counsellors, who were always urging him to assert himself, he should have thought it well to establish his right to the real, as well as the nominal, command of the native army. This delusion, if, as I believe, it was seriously entertained, proved of short duration. As soon as the news of the incident reached Cairo, Lord Cromer gave Riaz Pasha to understand that the censure passed on the British officers of the Egyptian army must be withdrawn, and that the Sirdar must be induced to retract his resignation. Riaz Pasha conveyed this communication to the Khedive, and, if I am rightly informed, did not hesitate to express his opinion, that if his Highness did not give way, the consequences might be serious. The words used at the Wady Halfa review were explained to be of no consequence. The Sirdar was assured that he possessed the full confidence of the Viceroy; and General Kitchener consented to continue his services as Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army. The incident, to use a French phrase, had been voided. But even after everything had been explained away, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, the British Government felt it necessary to mark their disapproval of the covert opposition of the Khedive to the British authorities in Egypt, which had culminated at Wady Halfa. Maher Pasha, who, under the Riaz Ministry, had used his position at the War Office in a manner detrimental to the authority of the Sirdar, was forced to resign. General Kitchener had the rank of K.C.M.G. conferred upon him by the Queen shortly after his

reappointment to the Sirdarship. Finally a despatch was written from the Foreign Office, containing the most distinct and explicit avowal that had ever yet been made as to the relations between the protecting and the protected State. It was affirmed in this despatch that—

"If the Prime Minister (of Egypt) and the heads of other important departments were to be summarily dismissed *in disregard of British advice*, there was nothing to prevent the dismissal of any other functionaries, European or native, who might not have the good fortune to fall in with the tendencies of the moment, or whose prominence might afford a favourable opportunity for the display of autocratic power. It was not too much to say, that, under these circumstances, the whole fabric, so laboriously built up during the last ten years, would have been at the mercy of caprice or intrigue, and would rapidly and necessarily have crumbled away."

The words I have given in italics form the sting of this communication. Put into plain English, it means that while England remains in occupation of Egypt, the Khedive has no right to interfere with the action of the British officials, or to dismiss either Ministers or officials, whether native or foreign, without the knowledge and consent of the British representative in Cairo. I am not clear how far this despatch was officially communicated to the Khedive or his Ministers. But on its tenor being made known, Riaz Pasha resigned his Premiership, and Nubar Pasha, who was considered likely to be more in harmony with the British authorities, became Prime Minister once more.

Personally, I would sooner have passed over the "frontier incident" in silence; but in pursuance of my purpose to give a consecutive narrative of the manner in which the "Story of the Khedivate" has gradually paved the way for British supremacy in the valley of the Nile, I could not but state clearly and fairly one of the most important of the stages in virtue of which our occupation has practically developed into a Protectorate. The despatch in question—written, it is well to remember, under a Liberal Ministry—marks a new era in Anglo-Egyptian history. Possibly the declaration of our supremacy might have been postponed for some time longer, if there had been a little more prudence on one side and a little more consideration on the other. But the position of the Viceroy of Egypt, under the British occupation, had got to be made clear sooner or later. If two men ride on one horse, one of them has got to ride behind, and it is obvious that, under the existing conditions of Egypt, the rider in front must be the representative of England.

It is only in human nature that the Khedive should have resented the somewhat rough fashion in which this truth was brought home to his mind. Nor does it seem to me reasonable to expect that he should at once have altered his opinions and become a partisan of British administration in Egypt. It is, however, to his credit, that having once recognized the conditions under which he is compelled to reign without ruling, he should have abstained from any petty attempt to

interfere with the new order of things established under the British occupation. There has been of late years no overt antagonism between his Highness and the British officials, who nominally advise, but who in reality direct, the native Ministers and heads of departments. His social relations with the English community are friendly, though hardly cordial. His private life, in as far as the private life of any Oriental household is ever known to the outside world, is irreproachable. Following his father's example, he has only one legal wife, to whom he is supposed to be much attached. He resides mainly at his palace of Koubeh, some few miles east of Cairo, and close by the Virgin's tree, so well known to tourists. He mixes much less in European society than either of his predecessors on the Vice-regal throne; but on all his rare public appearances he conducts himself with dignity. He is said to follow public affairs both at home and abroad with great interest, and to secure copious reports from his native officials. He is supposed to be a devout Mahometan, and to be more rigid in his observance of the laws of Islam than is common with educated followers of the Prophet. As a well-bred man of the world, he is always courteous to European visitors who have interviews with him either on matters of business or of ceremony, though he shows no desire to extend the circle of his foreign, and notably of his English, acquaintances. He is careful, though not parsimonious, in his personal expenditure; he exercises a vigilant supervision over the members of the

Khedivial family and over native Cairene society. He occupies himself mainly in the management of his estates, and devotes much attention to stock-breeding. In features he is a handsome likeness of his grandfather, with, as yet at any rate, a far better figure. The eyes and mouth and chin remind me of Ismail, but the face is wanting somehow in the geniality of expression which redeemed the plainness of the first of the Khedives. Taking him altogether, I should say, that since he abandoned the ambitions he entertained at the outset of his reign—or perhaps I should say, since he has postponed, for the present at any rate, all idea of carrying these designs into execution—he has been, from a British point of view, a model Viceroy. Though he had accepted Nubar Pasha as Premier after the Wady Halfa crisis, he never took very kindly to him as being both a Christian and a partisan of the British occupation.

On his Highness's return from a visit to Constantinople, during which Nubar had acted as Regent in his absence, a palace intrigue was got up against the Premier, and within a few weeks he was dismissed from office. As, in the opinion of the British agency, no question of State importance was concerned in the dispute between the Khedive and his Ministers, and as his proposed successor was Mustapha Fehmi, a *persona grata* with the British community, no objection was raised by our Consul-General to the change in the Ministry. The

only public incident of general interest in Nubar's short-lived Ministry, which from its inception contained no element of permanence, was the death of Ismail Pasha at Constantinople, where, as I have previously stated, he had been virtually a State prisoner for many years. It has never been intelligible to me, or to any one not acquainted with what I may call the palace politics of the Ottoman Empire, why the Sultan should have attached such great importance to the enforced sojourn of the ex-Khedive on the banks of the Bosphorus. It may be that his Majesty thought circumstances might arise which would make it his interest to have Ismail replaced on the throne of Egypt; and I have reason to believe that this supposition was entertained by both Tewfik and Abbas II. It may be that the Sultan was afraid that if Ismail were free, his restless energy and his intense desire to return to Egypt might induce him to ally himself with the revolutionary party in Turkey. To my mind, however, the most probable explanation is that so long as the Sultan held Ismail within his power, he was able to obtain money from him by dazzling before his eyes the prospect of Turkish influence being exerted on his behalf, so as to secure his return to Egypt. Whatever may be the true explanation of Ismail's detention at Constantinople, it is certain that his death removed a disturbing element in Egyptian politics. His corpse was removed to Cairo, and was buried with all due pomp and pageantry in the city he had done so much to beautify. The

natives, who have still to pay for the improvements by which Ismail transformed Cairo into an European capital, may perhaps not realize the advantage of this transformation. The English visitors, however, who enjoy in Cairo all the comforts and luxuries of a wealthy European city, are ungrateful if they fail to remember that the new Cairo is the creation of the first of the Khedives, and that to him, more than to any other single individual, England owes the commanding position she now occupies in the valley of the Nile.

THE ADVANCE ON DONGOLA

Secret negotiations between France and Abyssinia—Major Marchand sets forth on a so-called scientific mission from the French Soudan to the White Nile—Menelek expected to send army to meet and support Marchand on his arrival on Soudanese territory—British Government thereupon orders an immediate advance on Dongola—Orders carried out with utmost promptitude.

If Ismail Pasha's life had been prolonged for a few months, he would have had the satisfaction of seeing the policy he had recommended, at the date of the evacuation of the Soudan, carried into execution by the British Government. This policy, as I have explained, consisted in occupying the furthest point southwards the troops at our disposal could hold with safety, and then, step by step, proceeding to push onward till Khartoum was once more included within the territories of Egypt. Wady Halfa was selected in 1885 as the southernmost outpost of Egypt in the Nile valley. Our power to hold this outpost was clearly established by the repeated defeats we inflicted on the Dervishes when they attempted to break through our lines. But from 1885 up to 1896 no advance beyond the Wady Halfa frontier was executed, or apparently even contemplated. After the battle of

Toski, in 1889, the Dervishes remained on the defensive. The true story of the Khalifa's reign is so little known as yet, that the motives of his long inaction are not easy to understand. The most probable theory is that the losses sustained in the frontier campaigns had crippled the effective fighting force of the Dervishes; that the terrible outbreaks of cholera and small-pox in the Soudan had greatly diminished the military strength of the population; and that Abdullah el Taashi had come to the conclusion that it was useless to renew his raids upon Egypt till he had largely increased the number of his troops, and had secured outside support to counterbalance the power of England, as represented by the army of occupation. During this cessation of active hostilities, no formal truce or treaty of any kind was concluded between Egypt and the Soudan. The only approach to a mutual understanding consisted in the fact that the Egyptian Government, under pressure from England, consented, much against its will, to relax the cordon system under which the Soudanese had hitherto been debarred from any trade with the Red Sea ports. At this period our British statesmen, with very few exceptions, had no notion whatever of reconquering the Soudan. In consequence, the idea of promoting commercial intercourse between the Soudan and Egypt was viewed with favour in Downing Street, under the delusion that it might lead to the establishment of a *modus vivendi* between the two countries. This being the position of affairs, there was, in as far as I

can understand, no reason in International law why any European Power should not have regarded the Soudan as an unoccupied land, not comprised within the sphere of influence of either England or Egypt, and therefore liable to be occupied by any other Power, in accordance with the rules which are supposed to regulate the partition of the Dark Continent. I cannot see that we should have had any cause of complaint if France or Germany had undertaken to occupy the Soudan in the interests of civilization and humanity. We had had for years in our own hands the opportunity of overthrowing the tyranny of the Khalifa, and time after time we had refused to avail ourselves of the chance offered us. Once more, however, the mistakes of other Powers in respect of Egypt saved us from the consequences of our own errors.

After the occupation of Massowah by the Italians, and the war with Abyssinia, in which this occupation resulted, a number of foreign adventurers, chiefly French, had drifted to Adis Adeba, the present capital of Abyssinia. Menelek was naturally very hostile to the Italians, who had gone so far as to declare a Protectorate over Abyssinia; and throughout the kingdom of the *Negus* suspicions were entertained of the English, who had permitted the occupation of Massowah by the Italians, and were regarded as allies of Italy. The victory of Adowa had demonstrated the valour of the Abyssinian troops, and had proved also that for the first time in Abyssinian history the whole military forces of the country

were under the absolute control of one single ruler. Negotiations were entered into between the *Negus* and the French Republic, and there seems no reason to doubt that an arrangement was concluded by which France was to send an expedition from her possessions in the West Soudan to raise the French flag on the banks of the White Nile. It was arranged that an Abyssinian army should meet the French expedition in the neighbourhood of Fashoda; and the joint forces were then to establish themselves on Soudanese territory, so as to bar any claim on the part of England to the territory in question. It is not clear what part the Khalifa and the Dervishes were intended to play in this anti-English project. Communications of some kind certainly did pass between Adis Adeba and Khartoum at this period, and a French flag was, I am told, found in Omdurman upon its capture by our troops. The only facts, however, which can be now stated with any certainty, are that Major Marchand was despatched from the French Soudan with orders to establish himself at Fashoda under the protection of the French flag, and that he and the French authorities, with whose sanction the expedition was undertaken, thought they had reason to expect he would be met there by an Abyssinian army. These facts are stated very clearly in an article by M. René Pinon, published in the *Revue des deux Mondes* in February last, under the title of "La Resurrection d'un État Africain"; and it is difficult to avoid the admission that if any considerable number of Abyssinian

troops had been found at Fashoda ready to support the French expedition by force of arms, the object of the Marchand mission would have been secured, and France would now be securely established upon the territory traversed by the White Nile. M. Pinon's explanation of the causes which upset the arrangement contemplated is not very satisfactory. The most probable explanation is that the *Negus*, after the fashion of all native African potentates, preferred to be on the stronger side, and that when he learnt the English were marching on Khartoum in grim earnest, he felt convinced they were stronger than the French, in as far as the Soudan was concerned, and that therefore it was his interest to be on the side of England as against France.

Meanwhile, as always happens in the East, even where postal services and telegraphs are unknown, news had trickled down from the heights of Abyssinia to the plains of the Delta to the effect that the *Negus*, under French influence, was contemplating joining his forces to those of the Khalifa, in order to drive the English out of Egypt. This, at least, was the report which was current in the bazaars of Cairo. I have little doubt the report, as given in the above form, was baseless. The chief of the various causes which have enabled Abyssinia to maintain its independent existence for so many centuries, has been the fervour of her hostility to Islam, and it seems to me intrinsically improbable that the Emperor Menelek should ever have contemplated allying himself with

the Dervishes in a joint campaign. It is, however, easily intelligible that the French—whose sole immediate object was, with the help of Abyssinia, to obtain a footing on the West Nile before England had had time to capture Khartoum, and thereby to claim an effective occupation of the Soudan—should have been anxious to secure the neutrality of the Dervishes. It is therefore probable enough that communications were exchanged at this period between the Khalifa and the French authorities in the Western Soudan, by whom Marchand was despatched on his adventurous mission. But, in as far as I am aware, no positive evidence on this subject is forthcoming. Be this as it may, there is no question that, in the spring of 1896, the rumours, to which I have alluded, obtained considerable currency in Egypt. At this period I received letters myself from friends in Cairo, who were in close relations with the Khedivial Court, informing me that there was mischief brewing in the Soudan, and that the *Negus*, flushed with his victory over the Italians at Adowa, intended to send an Abyssinian army to the Soudan. Not much was known about the object of this expedition beyond the fact that it was certainly hostile to British interests. Surprise was expressed in these letters that the Government at home was taking no action against the danger thus threatened.

It is so much the custom of Englishmen to disparage their own Government, and to accuse it of want of foresight and of blind ignorance of the

intrigues going on against England abroad, that the British public has got to believe in this idle talk, which would lead to the conclusion that, in as far as foreign policy is concerned, England is heavily handicapped as compared with other European nations. Whether this conclusion is right or wrong in general, it most certainly was wrong in the present instance. Whenever the annals of British diplomacy during the last five years become public property, it will be found, in my opinion, that our Government were fully informed of all the steps taken secretly by France to bring about an effective occupation of the banks of the White Nile before England could raise any objection on the ground of prior occupation, and were cognizant of the intrigues with Menelek, conducted by agents of the French Republic. It will be found, too, that as soon as the existence of a serious possible danger to our position in Egypt became manifest, our Government averted the danger by prompt and decisive action.

In the early days of 1896, neither the Egyptian public nor the British civil and military authorities in Cairo had the slightest idea that the British Government contemplated any immediate advance beyond Wady Halfa, or, still less, any attempt to reconquer the Soudan. About midnight, on the 12th of March, 1896, telegrams from London were received at Wady Halfa and Cairo, ordering the commencement of a forward movement without an hour's unnecessary delay. The Egyptian garrison at Wady Halfa were

to march at once southwards, along the right bank of the Nile, under the Sirdar's command, and British troops were to be sent up to Wady Halfa from Cairo to supply the place of the Egyptian garrison.

These orders were executed with extraordinary promptitude, and on the morning following the overnight receipt of these orders, the Anglo-Egyptian forces set out upon the expedition which was to terminate with the capture of Khartoum. It was only after the departure of the troops that the news of their having departed became known at Cairo, and the intelligence was not even communicated to the Khedive till after the advance upon the Soudan had become an accomplished fact. The official explanation given for the advance being considered a matter of such urgency as to render a question of hours of serious importance, was that Kassala was then threatened by the Dervishes, and that, in the interest of the Italian forces, by whom the fortress was held, it was desirable to create a diversion by the advance of Anglo-Egyptian forces from the North. This explanation does not account for the hot haste in which the forward movement was undertaken. The haste is, however, perfectly intelligible, if there was serious reason to suppose a French expedition, supported by an Abyssinian army, might arrive shortly on the White Nile, with the object of establishing a right of occupation over Soudanese territory as against both England and Egypt. The fact that Egypt, conjointly with England, had already commenced military

operations for the reconquest of her Soudan provinces, would obviously militate against any claim on the part of France to have established an effective occupation, even if the Anglo-Egyptian forces had not reoccupied the capital of the Soudan before the arrival of a French military expedition on the banks of the White Nile. Upon this theory, the apparent discourtesy of not informing the Khedive of the intended resumption of a forward policy until this policy had actually been set in operation, is also capable of a very simple interpretation. The entourage of his Highness at this period included various persons in constant and intimate communication with the French Government. In an Oriental palace it is impossible to keep State news a secret, and if the impending campaign for the recovery of the Soudan had become known at the Khedivial Court, it would have been known also at the Quai d'Orsay; and various objections might have been raised which might have materially delayed the immediate commencement of the campaign. I believe that when the facts of the case became known, his Highness recognized the force of the considerations which induced the British authorities in Egypt to act on the instructions telegraphed from London, without previously obtaining his approval and sanction.

Moreover, any irritation which might have been caused by the expedition being undertaken without the Khedive being consulted, was removed within a very short period by an incident in which, as usual, France, with a desire to thwart British ascendency in

Egypt, played unintentionally into our hands. Almost immediately after the Egyptian troops had commenced their march from Wady Halfa, Egypt, being in want of funds for the cost of the campaign, applied to the *Caisse de la Dette* for an advance of £500,000 from the Reserve Fund in the hands of the Commissioners, who were authorized by the London Convention of 1885, as modified by the financial arrangement of 1888, to make advances "for any extraordinary expenditure incurred with the previous sanction of the Commission of the Debt." The prosecution of a campaign for the recovery of the Soudan was considered by four out of the six Commissioners as coming within the scope of legitimate extraordinary expenditure, and the advance requested was voted by a majority of four to two, the supporters of the grant being the representatives on the Commission of England, Germany, Italy, and Austria, the opponents being the French and Russian members. The £500,000 was duly paid into the Egyptian Treasury. The dissident Commissioners thereupon applied to the Cairo Court of the International tribunals for an injunction to order the restoration of these funds, not so much on the ground that they disapproved of the object for which the grant had been made, as that they contended no grant for such a purpose could be legally given unless the Commissioners were unanimous in their consent. The application was heard before the court in the month of June, and the Franco-Russian contention was

declared to be valid. In consequence, the Egyptian Government was ordered by the court to repay the £500,000 with interest to the *Caisse de la Dette.* In the interval between March and June a very large amount of the grant had been already expended on the campaign, and a still larger amount was pledged for the payment of contracts entered into by the War Office. The Khedivial Government was therefore placed in a position of extreme difficulty, as there were no funds immediately available for the repayment of the grant, while, on the other hand, the order of an International tribunal could not be disregarded on the part of the State without giving rise to serious International complications. At the instance, however, of Lord Cromer, the British Government offered to provide Egypt with the sum required. This wise act of liberality, performed in order to facilitate the prosecution of the campaign, which Egypt had instituted on English advice, for the re-conquest of her lost territory in the Soudan, had a great effect in reconciling official circles in Egypt to the virtual Protectorate exercised by England. At the same time our action showed the Commission of the Public Debt that resistance to British supremacy was not only impolitic, but useless. Thus once more France, while intending to weaken our authority in Egypt, contributed to its consolidation.

ON THE ROAD TO KHARTOUM

The Egyptian army—Its merits and defects—Occupation of Firket and Dongola—Parliament votes £800,000 for prosecution of Soudan campaign—Victory of Atbara—Capture of Omdurman and flight of the Khalifa—News of Marchand's arrival at Fashoda—The Sirdar starts for Fashoda and hoists Egyptian flag—France agrees to evacuate Fashoda—Pursuit of the Khalifa—His defeat and death at Om Debrikat.

His Highness Abbas II. had been for three years on the throne when the Anglo-Egyptian forces set forth on the campaign which was to restore to Egypt the provinces she had been compelled by England to evacuate fifteen years before. From no fault of his own, the Khedive played a subordinate part in the re-conquest of the Soudan. The military operations were conducted under the orders of the Sirdar. The native regiments were, with few exceptions, commanded by British officers, and were accompanied by British troops. I do not think the most ardent partisan of "Egypt for the Egyptians" would contend that the native forces could have defeated the Dervishes by themselves. For very obvious reasons,

the British officers of the Egyptian army were disposed to exaggerate rather than to disparage the merits of the troops they commanded. I can remember the period when, in the Anglo-Egyptian military world, it was regarded as rank heresy to express a doubt as to the possibility of converting the fellaheen into good fighting material if they were drilled and trained and led into action by British officers. The belief in this possibility is still maintained as an article of faith, but without the same fervour of conviction. The fellaheen regiments are quick at learning drill; they are obedient to orders; they are hard-working and docile. In the transport service, and in the laying down of the railway, whose construction, owing to the marvellous energy of Lord Kitchener, and the great engineering ability of Captain Girouard, kept pace with the advance of the army southwards, the Egyptian troops did good yeomen's service. By long and careful training under British control, they had also acquired the passive courage which enables troops to stand firm under fire, a courage in which, during the earlier years of their warfare with the Dervishes, they had been utterly wanting. Experience, too, had taught them that the wild Bedouins of the desert were not as formidable as they had been supposed to be in the days of the Egyptian defeats at Kashgil under Hicks, and at El Teb under Baker. But still I adhere to the belief which, as I have mentioned, was expressed to me by Tewfik Pasha, that, do what you like, you will

never make the fellaheen good fighters. A British officer of the highest distinction in the Egyptian military service confirmed this belief of mine not long ago by expressing the following views in my presence:—

"The Egyptian soldier has many good merits; his one fatal defect as a soldier is that he has not the love of killing which animates all good troops on the field of battle. Fighting is distasteful to him apart from its dangers. He has no wish to be killed, and no wish to kill others. The result is that when it comes to charging the enemy or storming a position, he does not rise equal to the occasion; but under ordinary circumstances, and when led by officers in whom he has confidence, he can be trusted to stand under fire."

I believe the substantial justice of this statement would be admitted privately, if not publicly, by most officers in a position to form a trustworthy opinion of the Egyptian soldiery from personal experience. I should say my informant added that his remarks did not apply to the black regiments in the Egyptian army, who, as a body, were born soldiers, fond of fighting for fighting's sake, and eager to kill not only in order to protect their own lives, but out of the lust of slaughter, which comes to all martial races when their blood is up.

I have dwelt upon this aspect of the Egyptian army, not so much on account of its military interest,

as because it seems to me to throw considerable light on the character of the fellaheen population, the descendants by race, as well as by succession, of the old Egyptians in the days of the Pharaohs. For countless generations they have been virtually slaves to one taskmaster after another, and—as it would seem from their history—have had no higher aspiration than that the master for the time being should not be unduly hard, or the tasks imposed unreasonably severe. If this view is correct, it is easy to understand why Lower Egypt, whose population consists mainly of the fellaheen and the Copts, should be so easy a country to govern, and one so indisposed to take up arms in her own defence. The Arabs of the deserts, which extend on either side of the Nile, belong to a far stronger race than the fellaheen; but it is the patient, stolid industry of the latter which has created, and which still maintains, the marvellous agricultural wealth of Egypt. The Nile valley is a model breeding-ground for cultivators of the soil, but not for soldiers.

To pass from this digression, it is sufficient to say that the first stage of the advance on Khartoum was accomplished by the beginning of June, 1896, when the Sirdar occupied Firket, south of Wady Halfa, after having routed the Dervishes. After the occupation of Firket, no further advance was made till the middle of September. An unusually low Nile, an exceptional number of sand-storms, and an outburst of cholera, retarded all military operations.

The advance, however, was recommenced on the 15th of September; and within ten days our forces crossed the Nile and took possession of Dongola, which was surrendered without any serious fighting. The Anglo-Egyptian armies were welcomed as deliverers from the tyranny of the Khalifa; but nobody acquainted with Egypt would attach much importance to the enthusiasm with which success is always greeted in Oriental countries. In pursuance of the tactics General Kitchener adopted throughout the campaign, a long halt was made at Dongola. During this halt something approaching to a civilized administration was re-established in the province which, previous to the evacuation, had been reckoned the richest of the Egyptian possessions in the Soudan. The moral effect of the rapid re-establishment of order, after the expulsion of the Dervishes, was of great advantage in the prosecution of the campaign. But the motives which caused the Sirdar to delay his progress were financial rather than political. The British Government clung tenaciously to the theory that, though the reconquest of the Soudan was undertaken at our instance, and for the protection of our Imperial interests in the Nile valley, the cost must, in the first instance, be provided by Egypt, not by England. In consequence, the expenses of the campaign had to be supplied by the Egyptian Treasury; and the highest credit is due to the Sirdar for the manner in which he contrived to cut down all expenditure, so as to enable the war to be

conducted successfully without exhausting the meagre funds placed at his disposal. Whether this rigid economy, adopted in accordance with the fiction that the war was waged in the interest of Egypt, not of England, was not penny wise and pound foolish, may be matter for doubt. The advance beyond Dongola had meanwhile been greatly facilitated by the construction of a direct railway line across the desert, leaving the Nile at Wady Halfa, and rejoining it at Aboo Hamed. This line is said to have been completed at the rate of one mile a day.

After the meeting of Parliament in February, 1897, the British Government summoned up courage to drop the pretence that the campaign for the re-conquest of the Soudan was a matter for which England was not directly responsible. In moving a vote for the expenses of the Dongola expedition of close upon £800,000, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated—

"that since the Dongola expedition was undertaken, the British Government had never concealed either from Parliament or the country that, in their view, there should be a further advance in the same direction; that Egypt could never be held to be permanently secured so long as a hostile Power was in occupation of the Nile valley up to Khartoum; and that England, *having compelled the Egyptian Government to abandon the Soudan*, had incurred towards its inhabitants responsibilities for the fulfilment of which the moment had arrived, now that the hateful rule of the Khalifa was crumbling to decay."

On the 6th of September, Berber was reached and occupied without opposition. Any further advance was then postponed till the end of the year, and the remaining months were employed as usual in pushing on the railway with all possible speed. Even now very little is known of the campaign, as seen from the side of the Dervishes, and the long inaction of the Khalifa and his Generals can only be accounted for by the personal quarrels, tribal disputes, and local animosities which in all times have paralyzed the action of semi-barbarous armies, however great may be their courage or however fervent their fanaticism. But, with the commencement of 1898, the Khalifa seems to have determined upon assuming the offensive. Mahmoud, the ablest of his Generals, was reported to be marching upon Berber; and as the Egyptian contingents, in the opinion of the Sirdar, required reinforcing, a British brigade was despatched to their assistance from Cairo and Malta, and arrived at Berber in the first days of March, 1898. The battle of Atbara was fought and won on the 8th of April. The Dervishes, though they fought with their old courage, were routed after their zareba had been stormed by the British troops, supported by the native forces. Mahmoud was taken prisoner, and his army was practically broken up. With this, the most important fight of the whole campaign, the way lay open to Khartoum, as the Khalifa had resolved to reserve his whole strength for the defence of his fortified stronghold of Omdurman, and to await the advance of the

invaders. With his usual caution, the Sirdar, on his side, determined to wait at Atbara till the Nile was at its flood, and till further British reinforcements had joined the expedition. The final stage of the advance was only commenced about the middle of August, and on the 1st of September our troops arrived within sight of Omdurman without having been molested on their march by any other difficulties than those presented by the nature of the country and the intense heat of the season. In front of the fortress the Dervish army—numbering, it is calculated, over 40,000 men, as against the 12,500 under the Sirdar's command—were drawn up ready for action. The night passed, contrary to expectation, without any attack from the Dervishes. At daybreak the fight commenced. Its story, as I have heard it told by those who were present, is a very simple one. Time after time the Dervishes charged against our troops, and time after time they were mowed down by our artillery and rifle fire. As the front ranks of the Dervishes fell dead or wounded upon the ground, the rear ranks rushed into the vacant places, shouting as they came on, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet!" The numbers of the killed on either side tell their own tale. The bodies of 10,800 dead Dervishes are said to have been counted on the field of battle, and 27,000 were found wounded. Against this enormous death-roll, the casualties of the English and Egyptian troops, namely, of 48 killed and 382 wounded, seem almost trifling. I confess, however, I

am always somewhat sceptical as to the estimates made by a victorious army of the losses sustained by their opponents. Undoubtedly the Sirdar was fully justified in using the phrase he employed in his despatch, announcing the victory, as "the practical annihilation of the Khalifa's army." It so happened that some months after the battle of Omdurman, I happened to be a passenger in the same vessel in which Lord Kitchener was returning to Egypt after his visit to London. One day, while we were both sitting in the smoking-saloon, one of our fellow-passengers remarked to the Sirdar, "I suppose the charge of the Dervishes at Omdurman was a grand military spectacle?" The Sirdar's answer was, "Well, it was not very much of a battle after all." And I believe this is the truest account ever yet given of the victory. At the same time the Sirdar was fully justified in declaring—to quote again the despatch sent after the battle—that the defeat of the Dervishes before Khartoum had brought about "the extinction of Mahdism in the Soudan, and the submission of nearly the whole country formerly ruled under Egyptian authority."

In the course of the afternoon of the day on which the victory had been won, the fortress of Omdurman surrendered; and on the following Sunday the British and Egyptian flags were hoisted over the palace at Khartoum, where Gordon, thirteen years before, had found the death which ended his long agony.

Three days had not elapsed from the hoisting of the British flag over the capital of the Soudan when news reached Khartoum that a number of white men were encamped at Fashoda, a village on the White Nile, about three hundred miles to the south, and that an expedition had already been sent by the Khalifa, some weeks before to ascertain who the strangers were, and what was the object of their arrival. The Sirdar had doubtless learnt from home all that was known there about the Marchand Mission, and resolved, with his usual promptitude, to start at once and investigate for himself the meaning of this strange intelligence. It is characteristic of the man that, in order to avoid the possibility of the news leaking out prematurely, he insisted on all newspaper correspondents returning to Cairo, on the plea that the war waged against the Khalifa was virtually at an end.

The flotilla which carried the Sirdar, together with a company of the Cameron Highlanders and two Soudanese battalions, left Khartoum on the 10th of September. On their way they encountered the Khalifa's expedition, which, on the plea of being in waiting for reinforcements, had apparently made no active effort to dislodge the new-comers from their position. The Dervishes, on learning that Khartoum had fallen, contented themselves with firing a few shots, and offered no further opposition. On the 18th the flotilla arrived within sight of Fashoda, and discovered that an encampment had been constructed

there, composed of some half a dozen French officers and about a hundred native troops from the French province of Senegal. An interview took place between Major Marchand and the Sirdar on the latter's steamer. It appeared that the so-called exploring party were in dire straits for lack of food and ammunition, and were presumably unable to advance further, pending the arrival of the Abyssinian army, of whose approach they could obtain no intelligence. The Sirdar then informed Major Marchand that the Khalifa's reign was at an end; that the Soudan had reverted, not only by previous occupation, but by right of actual conquest, to Egypt; that therefore no other Power had any right to claim possession of any part of the territories of Egypt; and that he intended forthwith to raise the Egyptian flag at Fashoda. Major Marchand replied that he had acted under the orders of the French Government in hoisting the tricolour at Fashoda, and that he could not haul it down or withdraw his troops until he had received fresh instructions. In view of the superiority in numbers of the Anglo-Egyptian forces, any resistance to the hoisting of the Egyptian flag was, he admitted, out of the question. The flag was therefore raised; a salute was fired in honour of the event; and a sufficient force was landed at Fashoda to secure the Egyptian standard against any attempt on the part of the French to dislodge it from its point of vantage. The Sirdar then returned to Khartoum; and the

question at issue between France and England passed out of his hands into those of their respective Governments.

Lord Salisbury showed great judgment in declining to enter into any abstract discussion upon the question of the Egyptian title to the Soudan. I confess that if the controversy had been submitted to any court of International jurists, the verdict would, in my opinion, have been in favour of the French contention. On the other hand, whatever might be the legal strength of the French case, equity was obviously on our side. England had made public her intention of restoring the Soudan to Egypt, and had commenced a campaign for this avowed end and purpose. The attempt therefore of the French Government to forestall the action of England by sending an expedition secretly, in order to occupy a position which would have given France the command of the White Nile, was a distinct act of hostility. Lord Salisbury was thus justified, in principle, as well as in policy, in confining himself to repeating in diplomatic language the phrase ascribed to Marshal MacMahon, *J'y suis, j'y reste.* The French Government were politely informed that we had got possession of the Soudan in conjunction with Egypt; that we intended to keep possession; and that, if needs be, we were prepared to uphold our claim. As soon as it was understood in Paris that England was really in earnest, the French Government gave up the point in dispute, and issued orders

to Major Marchand to haul down the French flag at Fashoda, and to return to Europe. After all, in the conduct of public affairs, there is no safer policy for the British Empire than to act upon the motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit.* The action of our Government increased the respect we had acquired abroad by the success of our arms. The fact that, in case of need, we were ready to run the risk of war with France, created a profound impression abroad, and especially in Egypt. For the first time in our complicated relations with the Khedivial Government, we had avowed distinctly and unmistakably that to assail Egypt was to assail England ; and the obvious advantage thus accruing to Egypt from the British occupation contributed largely to reconcile the Khedive to the diminution of his own personal authority, inseparable from a foreign occupation. It was a curious coincidence that the news of the French Government having withdrawn from an untenable position was received in London on the 9th of November, and was communicated by Lord Salisbury to the audience at the Guildhall, at the Lord Mayor's dinner, Lord Kitchener, who had just arrived from Egypt, being amongst the guests of the evening.

With the fall of Khartoum, the war was over. But, as under somewhat similar circumstances in South Africa, the termination of the campaign was followed by a period which could hardly be called a reign of peace. The Khalifa, after his escape from Omdurman,

was still in command of a considerable military force, and, what is more important, enjoyed a high prestige, due partly to the loyalty of the Baggara tribe, partly to his hold on the whole Arab population as the representative of Islam; and, above all, to the terror which his name still inspired. He was first heard of at Duem, where he was said to be in dire straits, having, it was reported, only succeeded in retaining the services of a few hundred followers. An expedition was sent with the object of capturing the Khalifa; but on its arrival at Duem, he was found to have quitted the place, accompanied by an army numbered by thousands instead of hundreds. It was impossible to follow him; and during the ensuing twelve months he was heard of at different points, wandering from place to place, and seeking everywhere to raise fresh forces, either by threats or promises. In September, 1899, apparently trustworthy information was obtained to the effect that Abdullah el Taashi had established himself with an army of 10,000 Dervishes at Jeb El Gheddur, a hill some hundred miles distant from Fashoda, in the direction of the Sahara desert. A second expedition, under the command of the Sirdar, only reached Jeb El Gheddur to find the Khalifa had again made good his escape; and owing to the difficulties of the country and the distance of the Anglo-Egyptian forces from their base of operations, pursuit was again found to be impossible. In November the Intelligence Department of the

Soudan, admirably directed by Colonel Sir Francis Wingate, ascertained that the Khalifa was retracing his steps towards the West Nile; that the island of Abba was probably his objective point; and that a large force of Dervishes, under the command of Ahmed Fedil, had been seen in the neighbourhood of the river. Colonel Wingate was thereupon despatched on a third expedition to disperse Ahmed Fedil's army, and, if possible, to discover the Khalifa's whereabouts. After having defeated Ahmed Fedil's forces, the Anglo-Egyptian force tracked Abdullah El Taashi to his lair at a village called Om Debrikat, where he was waiting in order to effect a junction with his lieutenant, of whose recent defeat and rout he was still in ignorance. Retreat was impossible; the Khalifa was brought to bay; and, as his last chance of escape, he resolved to lead the attack on the Egyptian force, the greater part of which consisted of Soudanese troops, commanded by British officers. The Dervishes advanced with their habitual contempt for death; but here, as at Omdurman, the Maxim guns mowed them down rank by rank. In the end, seeing that the battle was lost, the Khalifa determined to avoid the shame of capture, and, gathering his Emirs round him, made a final charge, which only ended when the asssailants, one by one, had met their death. The end was not unworthy of the part the Khalifa had played in the history of the Soudan; and the gallantry he evinced in a forlorn hope cannot but create an impression, to

my mind, that the dead tyrant had nobler qualities about him than he was commonly given credit for by popular repute. Be this as it may, Mahdism died at once and for ever in the Soudan with the death of Abdullah el Taashi.

THE "CONDOMINIUM"

Convention between England and Egypt for joint administration of the Soudan—Conditions of Convention—Autocratic character of existing administration—Anomalous system has worked satisfactorily—Khedive restricts number of princes—Death of Nubar Pasha—Reminiscences of his last days—His funeral at Alexandria.

THERE is a certain appropriateness in the fact that the last important event I have to narrate, in the tangled complications which have characterized the relations between England and Egypt throughout the existence of the Khedivate, should be the creation of a new form of government, for which, in as far as I am aware, the annals of history afford no parallel. In the first days of 1899—that is, while the Khalifa was still wandering about the Soudan at the head of a powerful army—a Convention was concluded between the British and Egyptian Governments as to the form under which the administration of the Soudan was to be conducted in future. As a matter of fact, the British Government recommended the Egyptian Government to adopt certain arrangements with regard to the Soudan, and under the existing relations between the two Governments, as I have already explained, a recommendation from the

predominant partner is tantamount to an instruction. The purport of the advice given after the capture of Khartoum was that Egypt should in future administer the Soudan conjointly with England. Logically, Egypt might have demurred to the proposed arrangement as one-sided. After all, Egypt had held and ruled the Soudan since the days of Mahomet Ali; she had evacuated the Soudan, much against her own will, in obedience to the demands of England. She had recovered possession of the Soudan after a campaign in which the bulk of the troops engaged belonged to her own army; and she might reasonably have considered that she was entitled to re-enter into the full possession of her re-conquered provinces. Indeed, the main case of England as against France, in the Fashoda question, rested on the assumption that the Soudan belonged to Egypt, and that her tenure was only suspended, not cancelled, by her evacuation in 1884. Whatever may have been the view taken in Cairo concerning the abstract title of Egypt to the sole Suzerainty of the Soudan, the Khedivial Government was not disposed to raise any objection to the system of joint rule recommended by England. It was more than doubtful whether Egypt could retain her military hold over the Soudan by herself. It was absolutely certain that she could not hope to establish order in the Soudan, and to develop its resources, without the administrative and financial assistance of England. This assistance could obviously not be forthcoming except on

condition that the Soudan was to be administered under English control. There was, as I have said before, a great deal of exaggeration in the theory put forward in England, at the period of the evacuation, that the insurrection led by the Mahdi was caused solely by the exactions of the Egyptian officials in the Soudan. When all is said, the administration of the Soudan by Egypt was humane, civilized, and enlightened, in comparison with the rule of the Mahdi and the Khalifa. Still, the corruption, greed, and incompetence of the native officials, appointed from Cairo to administer the Soudan, had undoubtedly contributed to the outbreak of the Dervish insurrection; and any attempt to restore the old order of things would have gravely increased the chance of further disturbances. The fact therefore that England was in future to be openly associated with Egypt in the government of the Soudan rendered the re-annexation of the country to Egypt far less unpopular to the Soudanese than it would have been otherwise. I do not hesitate to say that throughout all the East there is a well-nigh universal belief in the general justice and consideration of English rule towards her native subjects. This belief renders her sway far less distasteful to the Mahometan world than that of any other Christian Power. In consequence, England was well advised in proposing, and Egypt was equally well advised in accepting, the scheme for a joint administration of the Soudan.

By this scheme, which, for want of any other term,

is best described as a "Condominium," the British and Egyptian flags are to float side by side in the Soudan. All acts of administration are to be performed, and all decrees are to be issued, in the joint names of the British and Khedivial Governments. All responsibilities and liabilities incurred in the administration of the Soudan are to be shared in common by both kingdoms. The nearest approach to such a system of administration was the "Condominium" over Schleswig and Holstein, established between Austria and Prussia after the defeat of Denmark; and this Dual Government collapsed after a few months owing to the fact that the twin rulers of the Duchies went to war with one another. There would be every reason to anticipate a like result in the present instance, supposing England and Egypt were Powers of even approximate equality of strength. As things are, the real administration of the Soudan rests—and must rest, so long as our armies occupy Egypt—in the hands of England; and the Convention by which the "Condominium" was established has been carefully contrived, so as to secure the predominance of England in the Soudan, while giving as little umbrage as possible to the susceptibilities of Egypt. By this Convention, the Soudan is, for the most part, to be garrisoned by Egyptian troops, but their command is to be placed in the hands of an English Governor, appointed nominally by both Powers, but whose appointment is irrevocable without the consent of England. In the first instance, Lord Kitchener was naturally selected as Governor. On his leaving

for South Africa, he was succeeded, both in the Sirdarship and the Governorship, by Sir Francis Wingate. There are obvious reasons why, so long as the Soudan is of all Egyptian territory the province most likely to be the scene of military operations, the English Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army and the English Governor of the Soudan should, under the "Condominium," be one and the same person. What would happen if, in his dual capacity, the Sirdar received orders from the Khedivial Government inconsistent with the instructions sent to him, as Governor, by the British Government, is one of the many hypothetical questions which may be asked concerning the complicated relations of England to Egypt under an unavowed Protectorate. In theory, the question is one impossible to answer. In practice, the answer is to be found in the fact that in any issue between two distinct authorities, the stronger of the two necessarily carries the day.

Up to the present the Soudan has been governed by a despotism as absolute, as that of Russia or Turkey, though more enlightened. The will of the Governor is law; and from his will there is no appeal, except to himself. Until the country is pacified, no other system of rule is possible. But with the restoration of order and public tranquillity, the Soudan cannot be kept much longer closed to the outer world. When once its doors are opened, there will be a rapid influx of tourists, traders, and speculators, chiefly of Levantine or Greek nationality, who will constitute an independent

civilian element, of which the most autocratic of rulers must take account. Foreign States, and France especially, will demand the appointment of Consular representatives throughout the Soudan; and the demand is too reasonable to be resisted much longer. The International courts also contend that their jurisdiction extends to the Soudan, as having been formerly, and being now once more, part and parcel of Egyptian territory. One of the chief supposed merits of the "Condominium" is the support it gives to the Anglo-Egyptian contention that the authority of these tribunals is confined to Egypt proper; but this contention is disputed by the courts in question, and it is not clear whether it is sustainable in law. Then, again, the irrepressible missionary controversy is calculated to hamper the action of the "Condominium" as soon as the exclusion of missionaries from the Soudan can no longer be justified by military exigencies.

Meanwhile, it should be acknowledged that the relations between the British and the Egyptian Governments have remained exceptionally harmonious since the re-conquest of the Soudan. In Egyptian opinion, the bare fact of the Soudan being in the hands of a hostile Government constituted a permanent source of danger to the marvellous river on which Egypt, literally, as well as metaphorically, depends for her existence. This danger has now been removed by the assistance of England; and its recurrence is obviously impossible, so long as England remains in occupation of the valley of the

Nile. In the same way the erection of the huge dam at Assouan, which is now on the eve of completion, has influenced popular opinion in Egypt far more than any of the legal, administrative, and sanitary reforms which have been inaugurated under the British occupation. It is true this work was constructed, not by the British Government, but by British capital and by British commercial enterprise. Still it is obvious to every educated Egyptian that the funds would not have been forthcoming to erect an immense reservoir above the first cataract, had it not been for the security from internal trouble and external attack afforded by the British occupation. The most ignorant of fellahs thoroughly understands and appreciates the value to Egypt of having a perennial supply of water for land culture, in addition to that supplied by the annual overflow of the Nile; and can hardly fail to recognize the truth that, whatever else England may have done, or left undone, in Egypt, she has largely extended and improved the system of irrigation, which forms the life-blood of the country. Abbas II. is far too intelligent a Prince not to appreciate the benefits, in respect of her water supply, which Egypt has already received as the result of the British occupation; and the consciousness of this fact has done much to lessen the disfavour with which the British occupation was at one time regarded by the Khedivial Court. I have reason, too, to believe that his Highness was very favourably impressed by his recent visit to England, and was

gratified by the good-will exhibited towards him by the British public. Moreover, the birth of a son and heir in the month of May, 1898, after three years of marriage, was a source of great gratification to his Highness, not only as a father, but as a Sovereign. The young Prince seems destined, in the course of nature, to succeed his parent on the throne of Egypt, as the fourth of the Khedives, and as the seventh—if we take into the reckoning the brief reign of Ibrahim—of the hereditary Viceroys. It does not appear probable, judging by the course of recent events, that any future occupants of the Vice-regal throne will ever again play so important a part in Egyptian affairs as was played by Mahomet Ali and by Ismail Pasha. But this view is not likely to be in favour at the Khedivial Court. Nor can I say that the opposite view is untenable. Egypt is, and always has been, the country of surprises; and he would be a bold man who would venture to prophesy that the restoration of the personal rule of the Khedives under Abbas II. or his successors was an utter impossibility. The fact, therefore, that there is now an heir-apparent to the Egyptian throne cannot be regarded as a matter of indifference by all who are interested, one way or the other, in the politics of Egypt.

Within the last few months the Khedive has insisted, notwithstanding great opposition in Court circles, in carrying out a measure urgently demanded in the interests of Egypt. Up to the other day every

lineal descendant of Mahomet Ali was accorded the title of prince or princess. The consequence is that Egypt is overrun by a number of princes, most, if not all, of whom are supported out of the Civil List, on the ground that they have not sufficient fortunes of their own to uphold the dignity of the Khedivial family. The title of prince is unknown in Turkey, and is only employed as an act of courtesy in addressing the son and heir of the Sultan. Indeed, hereditary titles of any kind do not exist in the Ottoman Empire, where all rank is, in theory, solely conferred in recognition of military services, and therefore ceases with the life of the recipient. In Constantinople the members of the Khedivial family are not recognized as Princes, and are never officially addressed as having claim to any other designation than the one they are entitled to in virtue of their military rank, whatever that rank may be. During the period when French influence was supreme in the Vice-regal Court, it became the usage for all members of the Vice-regal family to be addressed as *Votre Altesse* or *Monseigneur*, and naturally enough the Princes and Princesses—more especially the latter—attached great value to this recognition of their princely status. The rapid increase in the number of claimants, by right of birth, to the title of prince or princess, and the consequent creation of a large Vice-regal caste, tended to depreciate the value of the distinction; and the Khedive wisely resolved to restrict the number of the personages entitled to claim princely

rank. In Oriental countries the younger members of a reigning dynasty are practically debarred from public life, and have every temptation to lead lives of self-indulgence, useless to themselves, and detrimental to the interests of the State. Amongst the Egyptian princes there are several men of high character and ability, such as the uncles of the Khedive, Prince Hussein and Prince Ibrahim, and his cousin Prince Djemil, men who have rendered good service to the country as landowners and officials. Every credit is due to them for leading lives devoted to higher objects than personal gratification; but all residents in Egypt, native as well as foreign, will agree that in the majority of instances the country derives little benefit from the existence of a swarm of princes. In order to abate their number, the Khedive caused a decree to be passed, ordaining that the children of living princes, who might be born after the issue of the decree, or who had not attained the age of fourteen at the time of its enactment, should have no claim to the princely title. Great dissatisfaction was caused by this ukase amidst the members of the Vice-regal family whose offspring were to be deprived of princely rank; and considerable concessions were made in the case of children already born, who had attained a sufficient age to resent the deprivation. But the general principle of disfranchisement, if I may employ the word, was upheld by the Khedive; and in the course of a few years, as the present generation dies away, the only personages in Egypt

entitled to princely rank will be the brothers and sisters of the reigning Khedive, and his own sons and daughters. I hope his Highness may prove equally successful in inducing his relations to follow his own example in having only one lawful wife, and in managing their estates intelligently and economically. My hopes, however, in this respect are stronger than my anticipations.

The only other event of grave importance to Egypt, which occurred during the period that elapsed between the fall of the Khalifa and the present day, is the death of Nubar Pasha, which took place in December, 1899. Its importance consisted not so much in the withdrawal of Nubar from public life, as in its historic interest. In the closing days of his last Premiership, Nubar sustained a serious accident, which to some extent crippled him, and which rendered it advisable for him to leave Egypt, in order to undergo medical treatment in Europe. I think, however, if he had been an inmate of the Palace of Truth, he would have had to admit that his ailments were rather the excuse for, than the reason of, his voluntary exile. Under the administration of Egypt by British officials there was no room for a native statesman with strong individual views and ideas of his own, which were not altogether in harmony with the policy of the Power whose armies occupied Cairo. Given the existing conditions of Egypt, a native Prime Minister is necessarily a sort of fifth wheel in the administrative coach,

and the post can only be filled satisfactorily by a man prepared to co-operate, not only loyally, but cordially, with the British authorities. I fancy myself that when Nubar quitted office he was not without a hope that circumstances might arise which would necessitate his return to public life in a position of greater power and less responsibility. All men who have played a leading part in public affairs are apt to imagine that the world cannot well get on without them; and Nubar was not altogether an exception to this rule. His sound judgment and his clearness of vision caused him to recognize fully the great benefits Egypt had derived from British administration; but I have little doubt he entertained a belief that these advantages might have been more signal and more durable if they had been accomplished by the machinery he himself would have employed. Failing health and domestic reasons, combined with a sense that his services to Egypt had not received the full recognition they merited, tended somewhat to sadden his later years. He took no special interest in the politics of foreign countries, except in as far as they affected Egypt, and he felt keenly the absence of occupation. Not very long before his last illness, he complained to me that he had tried to occupy himself, first with agriculture, and afterwards with the compilation of his memoirs, but that he found these occupations did not divert his mind. "Egypt," he added, "has been the one interest of my life, and I find I am too old to take any new interest to heart."

I remember, too, his telling me about the same time that he had been greatly troubled by the sufferings of his fellow-countrymen during the Armenian atrocities, and still more by the agitation raised for foreign intervention on their behalf.

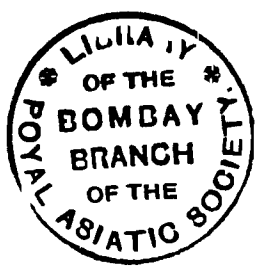
"My compatriots," to quote his remarks at the time, "come to me, as the best known of Armenian statesmen, and ask me to take the lead in demanding intervention. But my common sense tells me there is not a single Power in Europe which is prepared to go to war for the sake of coercing Turkey; and yet without war all the moral sympathy in the world is not only useless in itself, but tends to aggravate the condition of the Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. I can say this to a foreign friend, but if I say it to an Armenian, he thinks I am indifferent to my own people and my own faith."

Up to the time when his illness assumed an aggravated form, he cherished the hope of getting back to Cairo. "I want," he remarked, "once more to sit on the steps of my home in the evenings and gaze again at the stars, which one never really sees in Europe." During the last period of his illness he suffered much from pain, but he retained consciousness almost to the last; and to the end, as his family have told me, his conversation, when he was able to talk, was always about Egypt. He was buried, by his own wish, in the Armenian cemetery at Alexandria, and his funeral was attended by the chief notabilities of Egypt, native, Levantine, foreign, and British;

by all the members of the *corps diplomatique*, and by an immense concourse of people. It is not often in Egypt that such honours are paid to the memory of a deceased statesman unable, *ex hypothesi*, to make any return for the respect displayed to the dead. I had sometimes thought that Nubar was prone to over-estimate the affection borne him by the native population of Egypt for the services he had rendered to the country. But the unmistakably genuine manifestation of popular sorrow at his death convinced me he was so far right in his estimate as to prove that the natives recognized their indebtedness to him for the introduction of law and justice, for the restrictions placed upon the licence of despotic rule, and, above all, for the abolition of forced labour.

During Nubar's lifetime, one of the charges brought against him by his opponents was that he had amassed enormous wealth during his tenure of office. On his death, his will was proved under £150,000. Before the British occupation official salaries in Egypt were small in amount, but were made up by gifts from the Sovereign for special services. This system still prevails in all countries under Oriental rule. Such a mode of payment is not in accordance with our ideas, and has many manifest defects. But it would be absurd to blame Nubar, or, for that matter, any Minister in an Oriental country, if his conception of Ministerial duty does not altogether accord with our British notions. Nubar never made any secret of the fact that the bulk of his fortune was derived from

lands presented to him chiefly by Ismail Pasha, and by their subsequent rise in value. His death removed well-nigh the last of the Egyptian statesmen who had held high office previous to the British occupation, and of these statesmen he was not only far the greatest in intelligence, but the one who stood first in popular repute for integrity and humanity. By all who, in common with myself, knew him intimately, he will always be remembered as a friend, who inspired not only respect, but affection.



A RETROSPECT

Conclusions of the Retrospect—England's occupation due to accident, not to any deliberate design—Benefits Egypt has derived from British occupation—Extraordinary growth of wealth—Improved conditions of the fellaheen—General sense of security caused by belief in permanence of British occupation—Native sentiment towards our occupation—"Tommy Atkins" the true regenerator of Egypt Ismail's saying about unchangeability of Egypt.

IN the above pages I have endeavoured to give a consecutive account of the chain of events which has gradually converted Egypt from an independent State, subject to the nominal Suzerainty of the Sultan, into what may be fitly called an annexe of the British Empire, enjoying independence in name, but occupied by British troops and practically administered by British officials. If I have succeeded in my object, I think I must have made the following conclusions clear to my readers.

The establishment of British supremacy over Egypt has not been brought about in accordance with any settled design or deliberate purpose on the part of England. On the contrary, intervention was forced upon England by a series of causes, for which she was in no sense responsible. Even after intervention had been forced upon her, England

took every means in her power to render this intervention of a temporary character, and honestly believed that her occupation would soon be brought to a close. That this should have been so, is not perhaps creditable to the political intelligence and foresight of British statesmanship; but it is creditable to British honesty and loyalty. Both parties in the State, Conservatives equally with Liberals, were adverse to the idea of any permanent annexation. If England is now dominant in Egypt, this is mainly due to the construction of the Suez Canal; to the extravagance of Ismail Pasha, which necessitated financial intervention on the part of Europe; to the Arabi insurrection, which rendered military intervention indispensable; to the refusal of France to take part in the duty of suppressing the mutiny, or to co-operate with England in the restoration of order; and to the insuperable difficulties of the task we had undertaken, that of reconstructing and reorganizing the institutions of Egypt, in such a manner as to render her competent to protect herself, both at home and abroad, without our assistance. The plain truth is, that England has in Egypt drifted, step by step, into a position almost identical with annexation.

I am, however, inclined to think that even if Ismail Pasha and Arabi had never existed, Egypt could not have retained her independence indefinitely. During the century just ended, Europe has actually seized, or has contemplated seizing, every portion of

the southern littoral of the Mediterranean. Algiers has been annexed to France; Tunis has been placed under a French protectorate; the occupation of Morocco is ambitioned both by France and by Spain; and the acquisition of Tripoli is the avowed object of Italian policy. The principle upon which the partition of the Dark Continent is based, is that the occupation of a strip of African coast confers on the occupying European Power the right of claiming all the Hinterland not already occupied. It is inconceivable that in any general partition of North Africa, Egypt, the richest and most unwarlike of the States, whose territories border on the Mediterranean, should be left uncoveted and unappropriated. It is obvious that England could never permit any Continental Power to command her highway to India; and therefore, sooner or later, it must have become imperative upon this country to assume a position in Egypt similar to that which, owing to the chapter of accidents, she now occupies.

It may be well to say here, as I have said in my writings elsewhere on this subject, that I have never been a supporter of the theory that our occupation can be defended solely on the ground of the benefits it was expected to confer—and to a great extent has conferred—on Egypt. What I have contended throughout is, that our occupation of the valley of the Nile is justified by the exigencies of our Imperial position in India. In upholding this contention, I have been fortified by the belief that, under

our occupation, Egypt would be more prosperous, and the condition of her people would be materially improved. But though I rejoice to see this belief fulfilled, as the result of the reforms introduced into the administration of Egypt under British control, I have never been able to convince myself that it was England's duty to reform Egypt. It is her duty, as I maintain, to uphold her own "world might," and it is on this ground alone that her intervention in Egyptian affairs—an intervention which has led to a permanent military occupation—can, to my thinking, be fully justified.

But whatever my views may be as to the grounds on which our intervention may best be defended, I have no doubt as to the benefits Egypt has derived from our intervention. When I first set eyes on Cairo, more than thirty years ago, the process of reconstruction had already commenced on the initiative of Ismail Pasha. The desert then stretched up to the back of the New Hotel, which had just been opened; the Esbekieh gardens were a waste of sand, across which roadways were marked by posts and pales; Shepheard's Hotel was the centre of the European city; the quarters of Ismailia and of Kasr-el-Noubara were bare open spaces, dotted here and there with a few sparse wooden buildings; the roads of the city were mere tracks of sand; donkeys were the usual means of locomotion; and all the principal shops, frequented by European visitors, were in the Mouski, the central thoroughfare of the native quarter, and its

adjacent bazaars. The Europeanization of Cairo had commenced before the opening of the Suez Canal, and made rapid progress during the era of the loans, when money flowed into Egypt like water. In the course of a few years the waste ground lying behind the Esbekieh gardens became covered with a new suburb, called Ismailia, composed exclusively of European houses. The collapse of Egyptian credit in 1874 stopped the extension of Cairo, and little or no progress was made towards the completion of the new city during the troubled years of Ismail's deposition, of the Arabi insurrection, and of the period of suspense which ensued after the British occupation. It was only when it became evident that our occupation was destined to be permanent, that confidence was felt by all classes of the Egyptian community, native as well as foreign, in the lasting maintenance of law and order under British supervision. When Egypt once realized the advantages of the new order of things, money once more flowed into the Treasury, not as formerly, derived from foreign loans, but provided from the hoards of the wealthy natives and from the pockets of European investors in Egyptian agricultural and industrial undertakings. In the course of the ten years which preceded the re-conquest of the Soudan, Cairo was completely reconstructed by private enterprise. Anybody who had last seen it, say in the days of the Wolff Mission, would fail, I think, to recognize the new capital which has replaced the Cairo of a preceding generation.

The erection of the modern Europeanized city has been due, in the main, not to building speculation, but to the demand for new and better houses on the part not only of the European residents, but of the native landowners and capitalists. Cairo has thereby lost much of its quaint Oriental charm, but its inhabitants have gained by the acquisition of all the comforts and luxuries provided in the great cities of Europe.

It may be said that the growth of Cairo has been artificially stimulated by the presence of the British garrison. A similar reconstruction, however, has been witnessed in the provincial centres of Egypt, though on a somewhat less ambitious scale. To any one who recollects such towns as Benha, Zagazig, Assiout, and Damanhour, as they were a quarter of a century ago, their recent transformation seems even more marvellous than that of the capital. All these cities were unaffected in any direct way by the special causes which may have contributed to the rapid development of Cairo. The reasons of this process of universal reconstruction are simple enough. Security of private property, regularity of administration, protection to life and limb throughout the country, as provided under the British occupation, have not only increased the productive powers of Egypt to a marvellous extent, but have removed the dread of displaying wealth which, in former days, caused even those who had money to keep their wealth concealed. Nowadays the natives, from the rich landowners down to the humblest fellah, are beginning to understand

that whatever money they have got is their own to spend, and the result of this knowledge has been to increase their wants, and to remove the obstacles which precluded the open display of wealth. Even a passing tourist can hardly fail to mark the obvious improvement in the physical appearance of the fellaheen. As a body, they are better fed, better dressed, better housed, and less down-trodden in their appearance. I have mentioned in a previous chapter how, thirty odd years ago, I saw gangs of fellaheen, to the number of many thousands, working sullenly, under the terror of the kurbash, at road-making to the Pyramids. Only the other day I had occasion to visit some large masonry works, now being constructed by friends of mine, for purposes of land reclamation, on the banks of the Nile. The workmen were all natives, and were all paid regularly for their day's labour, most of which was done by piece-work. I never saw labourers working more cheerfully and more heartily, chanting and singing, for the most part, as they worked. From early dawn till after sunset they toiled on, with little or no break, except for the midday prayers, and for their work they received, on an average, sixpence a head for twelve hours' continuous labour under a broiling summer sun. Probably, as the demand for labour increases, the rate of wages will rise also; but for the present the fellaheen are perfectly satisfied with working at what an European labourer would regard as starvation wages, so long as they can work without the fear of the kurbash,

and with the certainty that they can keep for themselves the pittance they earn by their own toil. Whatever else we have failed to do in our attempt to reorganize Egypt, we have improved the lot of the fellaheen, and of that we may well be proud. Many years ago, in the early days of the British occupation, I happened to have a conversation on business matters with one of the wealthiest of the Levantine usurers, long since dead, who, in the course of our interview, expressed himself in indignant terms about the folly of the Government's attempting, at British instigation, to provide a better system of education for the fellaheen. In reply, I used the only argument I thought likely to impress my host, who had been entertaining me most sumptuously, and suggested that with higher education the fellaheen would become better customers, and that this would lead to an extension of trade. "That may be so," he answered, "but if once the fellaheen cease to be as ignorant as they are, they will never work for their present wages; and it is the cheapness of labour which has made my fortune."

I should be the last to deny that the various improvements which have been introduced into the administration of Egypt by the British authorities are calculated to ameliorate the general condition of the native population. The rapid increase of the population from about seven millions to ten millions in the course of a dozen years speaks volumes for the general well-being of the Egyptians under British supremacy. The establishment of native courts, where justice is,

as a rule, fairly administered under British control, the improved conditions of military service, the suppression, to a considerable extent, of bribery and corruption in the public offices, the regularity and fairness with which the taxes are collected, the reduction of taxation, the sanitary measures, enforced in the interest of the public health, the ameliorations introduced into the prisons and hospitals, the extension of railways, the spread of education, have all contributed to the wonderful prosperity of Egypt, and to the consequent recovery of her national credit. I am by no means certain, however, that these reforms, beneficial as they may have been, have commended themselves greatly to the native mind. Their ideas are not our ideas; their ways are not our ways. The Egyptians have been used to be ruled despotically for centuries without end; and their ideal of government is that of personal rule, administered by a strong and wise ruler. Delegated authority is unintelligible to their minds, and of all delegated authorities, that of boards and officials is the least congenial to their tastes. I should not be at all surprised to find that even amidst the classes which have benefited the most, both directly and indirectly, by our reforms, there were often regrets felt and expressed for the bygone days, when the will of the Effendina, the Lord and Master, was supreme, and when, by his favour, the lowest might be exalted to rank and fortune, while, by his disfavour, the highest and mightiest might be crushed to the dust. To have measurably suppressed bribery and cruelty, backsheish,

and kurbash, may seem to us an incalculable benefit; still it is well to bear in mind that all reforms cut both ways. It is good, from the ordinary Egyptian point of view, to be no longer exposed to the risk of being bastinadoed; but it is not obvious that to be deprived of the power of causing your neighbour to be bastinadoed is equally advantageous. In like fashion, it is one thing not to be forced to pay bribes in order to obtain justice; it is quite another thing to be unable to bribe, in order to perpetrate an act of injustice, which tells for your own profit or safety. Moreover, the very order and regularity of the administration we are gradually establishing in Egypt, are somehow distasteful to an Oriental population.

I am afraid that our rigid enforcement of regulations, however useful in themselves, both bothers and worries the very men for whose benefits the regulations are enforced. I always, therefore, have entertained doubts how far we could rely upon the gratitude of the Egyptians to support us in case any serious efforts should be made to dislodge us from the vantage ground we occupy in Egypt, and thereby to undo the good work we have accomplished in the past. I am not quite sure whether we have any strong moral claim on Egyptian gratitude, as the task we have undertaken and have accomplished so successfully was, after all, performed in our interests, not less than in those of Egypt. But I am sure that, even if we had any such moral claim, it would not be of much practical value. In as far as they have any individual opinions, the

Egyptians dislike the rule of Christians and foreigners. Even if they were firmly convinced that the retention of British control was demanded by the vital interests of Egypt, they would remain neutral in the event of our control being attacked. Egypt has changed masters time after time; and the change has invariably been acquiesced in by her native-born population. I can see no reason why it should be otherwise with regard to British rule. If, from any unforeseen cause, England were compelled to withdraw from Egypt, and our place there were filled—as it infallibly would be filled—by some other European Power, Egypt would accept the rule of our successors as passively as she has accepted the British occupation. I believe that under such an eventuality, the fellaheen, in days to come, would talk regretfully of the good time when the "Inglez" held sway at Cairo, and when there was peace and order and prosperity throughout the land; but I doubt their regret ever passing from the domain of sentiment to that of action. Without our presence, the reforms we have introduced would wither away, just as the crops on the banks of the Nile die as soon as the water fails to reach the soil; and, beyond the material works we have created, such as the railways, the canals, the dams and reservoirs of Assouan and Assiout, I doubt there being much left to perpetuate the memory of our rule.

Every year, however, that passes renders our withdrawal from Egypt more and more improbable. I cannot myself see that we have made much progress

as yet towards the avowed object of our policy, as propounded in Lord Dufferin's report, namely, that of reorganizing the administration of Egypt on enlightened ideas, so as to render the country capable of governing itself in accordance with these ideas supposing our troops should be withdrawn. What progress has been made towards this end seems to me to be of the crab order—backwards. Our theory of teaching Egypt how to govern herself, by enabling her to enjoy the advantages of just, honest, and progressive administration under British control, however sincerely the theory was conceived, and however loyally it has been carried out, was based on a delusion. England has indeed succeeded in establishing a system of administration in Egypt, which is an enormous improvement upon any Government the country has ever known; but this system depends for its vitality upon its being carried out by British officials. If the work was left in the hands of native officials, not subject to British authority, the old abuses of all Oriental government would revive at once. Tutelage is an excellent system for administering the affairs of persons incompetent to manage their affairs by themselves; but this system does not tend to render the persons under tutelage competent administrators. No wise man uses the word "never" with regard to the future. I do not say therefore that a time will never come when Egypt is fit for self-government, but I do say the prospect of this consummation being accomplished

is too remote to enter into the calculations of practical statesmanship. Until Egypt is able to govern herself we are compelled to remain there, if we are not prepared to ignore the considerations which caused even a Liberal Government, under Mr. Gladstone, to come to the conclusion that our armed intervention in Egyptian affairs was essential to the safeguard of our Empire. We have got therefore to remain Lords paramount in Egypt, and this we can only do by retaining our military occupation. A year or two ago there was a dinner given at Cairo, at which there were present most of the British officials who have taken leading parts in the reorganization of Egypt. The conversation naturally turned upon the marvellous transformation effected under British administration, and not unnaturally there was a certain amount of self-laudation. Amongst the guests was an old Anglo-Indian visitor to Egypt, who had held high rank in the Indian service. On a pause in the conversation, this gentleman remarked, "I agree with everything I have heard said about the good work that has been done in Egypt; but it seems to me we are apt to forget that this work has really been done by one man, and one man only." Some dissent was expressed by the rest of the company, and the visitor was asked to name the man to whom he considered the credit of having transformed Egypt was solely due. "His name," the visitor replied, "is known to all of you. It is Tommy Atkins." This is the plain truth. Tommy Atkins's

presence in Cairo is the bottom fact of the Egyptian situation.

For the present, therefore, our path in Egypt is clear. We have got to remain there in defence of our Imperial interests, and, having to remain there, we are bound to do our best for the interests of Egypt. It might perhaps have been better if Nubar's ideas had been adopted to some extent, and if the administration had been carried out by native officials, under British supervision and control, rather than, as at present, by British officials, with the aid of native subordinates. It is obvious, however, that in the former case, the reform of the whole administrative system would have been much slower than it has been under the latter. To set crooked things straight and make rough places smooth is the instinct of all British officials in dealing with Oriental races; and even if our officials had been instructed to efface themselves in the work of Egyptian reconstruction, they would have experienced the greatest difficulty in carrying out these instructions in practice. Anyhow, it is too late now for any fundamental change in the relations between the British and Egyptian officials under the British occupation. I am, as my readers may have discovered, no very sanguine believer in the progress of humanity in general, or of Oriental humanity in particular. All I, or anybody, can say for certain is that in Egypt England must go on sowing her seed upon the waters, with the hope that it may turn up

after many days. I cannot better conclude "The Story of the Khedivate" than by repeating a remark once made to me by the Khedive Ismail, on the occasion of one of my many interviews with him at the palace of Abdin. I had happened, for lack, I suppose, of any more appropriate remark, to ask his Highness if there was any news that day about Egyptian affairs. His reply was, "That is so like all you English. You are always expecting something new to happen in Egypt, day by day. To-day is here the same as yesterday, and to-morrow will be the same as to-day; and so it has been, and so it will be, for thousands of years."

INDEX

A.

Abbas Pasha I., Viceroy, accession, 19; his rule and character, 19, 20, 49; his death, 21

Abbas Pasha II., Khedive, accession, 457; his education, 458, 459; investiture, 460; early difficulties with British authorities, 460 *sqq.*; the later relationship, 468, 469, 505; characteristics, 468, 469; no share in the expedition of reconquest, 479, 480, 483; his heir, 506; his reform of family titles, 506 *sqq.*

Abd-el-Al, in the Arabi mutiny, 253 *sqq.*, 303

Abd-el-Kader, Governor-General of the Soudan, 321

Abdul Aziz, Sultan, visits Egypt, 58

Abdul Mouneim Bey, heir-apparent, birth of, 506

Abdullah el Taashi. *See* Khalifa

Abu Klea, battle of, 382, 384

Abyssinia, relations with Italy and England, 474; negotiations with France, 475, 476

Abyssinians, defeat of Ismail's troops by, 165

Achmed Pasha, death of, 56

"Achmed the Egyptian," pseudonym, 262

Acre, recaptured from Mahomet Ali, 16

Adowa, battle of, 474

Agreement as to British occupation (1882), 305, 306

Ahmed Fedil, Dervish leader, 497

Ahrendroop, Col., in the Soudan, 164

Aird. *See* Lucas and Aird

Alcester, Lord. *See* Seymour

Al-ed-Din Pasha, in the Soudan, 323

Alexandria, landing of the French at, 3; massacre at, 279 *sqq.*; bombardment of, 289

Ali Fehmi, in the Arabi mutiny, 253 *sqq.*; trial, 311, 312

Anglo-French control. *See* Dual Control

Anglo-Turkish Convention, the, 411 *sqq.*

Arabi Pasha (Achmed Arabi), the mutiny, 249, 251 *sqq.*, 515; early life, 253, 254; the *rôle* of patriot, 261, 262, 266; Assistant Secretary of War, 267; Secretary of War, 270; dismissed and recalled, 276, 277; responsibility for the Alexandria massacre, 282 *sqq.*; defends and evacuates Alexandria, 288 *sqq.*; his relations with Tewfik, 290; in open revolt, 291 *sqq.*; defeated at Tel-el-Kebir, 300; surrenders, 301, 303; trial and punishment, 307 *sqq.*; his relations with the Mahdi, 320

Army, British, landed in Egypt, 299; arrangements for withdrawal or reduction, 304-306, 338, 407, 408, 410; arrangements of the Wolff-Mukhtar Convention, 413, 414; its share in the reconquest of the Soudan, 483; the basis of occupation, 338, 526

Army, Egyptian, of Mahomet Ali, 11; of Ismail, insubordination of, 201; of Tewfik, its numbers reduced, 251; the Arabi revolt, 249 *sqq.*; its untrustworthiness, 304, 322, 407; in the Soudan, 321 *sqq.*; a strong army necessary to Egypt, 329, 330; English officers for, 331, 332, 413; the new Egyptian, in action, 422, 423; how reorganized, 429, 430;

its share in the reconquest of the Soudan, 484
Assouan, in 1885, 422 ; the great dam, 505
Atbara, battle of, 489
Austria, relations with the Khedivate, 147, 148, 181, 233, 237, 294 ; represented at the London Conference, 371 ; action in the *Caisse* for the Soudan advance, 481

B.

BAGGARA, tribe, 424, 496
Baird, General, 360
Baker, Sir Samuel, in Equatoria, 80, 165 ; his plan for recovery of Soudan, 452 *sqq.*
Baker, Col. Valentine, Commander-in-Chief and Chief of Police, 331, 332, 439 ; in the Soudan, 348 *sqq.*
Bank, a State, proposed, 143
Baring, Sir Evelyn. *See* Cromer
Barrot Pasha, Foreign Secretary, 211
Bavarelli, M., member of Commission of Inquiry, 175, 181
Beaconsfield, Earl of, buys Khedive's Suez Canal shares, 102, 103 ; despatches the Cave Mission, 133, 138 ; his attitude towards British intervention, 138, 139, 178 ; his view of General Gordon's mission, 353
Bedouin Arabs, 329
Bellaigue de Boghas, Comte, approached by Ismail's second Ministry, 210 ; Commissioner of Public Debt, 232
Berber, in the Mahdi's hands, 380 ; recovered, 489
Beyrout, bombardment of, 16
Bismarck, Prince von, policy in Egypt, 174, 194, 214, 215
Blignières, M. de, member of Commission of Inquiry, 175, 180 ; Minister of Public Works, 192, 197, 205 ; protests against Omar's dismissal, 203 ; proposed financial reforms, 207 ; his dismissal, 210 ; Controller, 231, 232 ; resigns, 272
Blum Pasha, member of Committee of Finance, 431
Blunt, Mr. Wilfrid, his support of Arabi, 259 *sqq.*, 266
Bonds, issued by Ismail, 93
Brassey, Peto and Betts, Messrs., 23
Broadley, Mr. A. M., counsel for Arabi, 311, 312
Bulwer, Sir Henry, 336
Burton, Sir Richard, 330

C.

CAIRO, French occupation of, 4 ; the modern city, 471, 517 *sqq.*
Caisse de la Dette, institution and regulation, 146, 147, 208, 235, 333 ; dispute on Lord Northbrook's proposal, 398, 436 ; refuses money for reconquest of Soudan, 481, 482
Capitulations, the, 91 ; explained, 119 *sqq.* ; modification of, 122 *sqq.*, 171 ; continuance of, 334
Cave, Mr. Stephen, 134 *sqq.* *See* next
Cave Mission, the, 51, 71, 88, 133, 152, 167 ; its object, 134 ; and report, 140, 166
Cazes, Duc de, 151
Chamber of Notables, 209 ; convoked by Ismail, 239, 240 ; by Tewfik, 265 *sqq.* ; action with the Arabi party, 270, 272, 274, 292 ; in Lord Dufferin's plan, 334
Cherif Pasha, his action towards the Commission of Inquiry, 182, 183 ; Premier of Ismail's second Ministry, 210 ; urges Ismail's abdication, 216 ; takes premiership under Tewfik, 264, 267 ; resigns, 344, 345
Childers, Mr., at the London Conference, 371
Churchill, Lord Randolph, 161 ; scheme for Turkish intervention, 409, 410, 412
Circassian officers, intrigues against, 253, 273
Colvin, Sir Auckland, Commissioner of Public Debt, 232 ; Controller, 245 ; opposes Arabi, 257, 264, 292 ; resigns, 272 ; financial adviser, 329, 431
Commission of Inquiry (1878), appointed, 174 ; its object and composition, 175 *sqq.* ; and report, 187 ; resumption, 208 ; resignation, 211, 231
Commission of Inquiry (Alexandria massacre), 283
Commission of Liquidation, appointed, 231 *sqq.* ; its investigations, 234, 238 *sqq.* ; report, 235 ; its settlement unworkable, 305
Commission of Public Debt, appointed, 147, 208. *See* Caisse de la Dette
Committee, financial reform, appointed, 431

Condominium, in the Soudan, 499 *sqq.*
Conference at Constantinople, 294
Conference of London, 371–373, 397
Connaught, Duke of, in Egypt, 305
Constitutional government, experiments in, 189 *sqq.*; Lord Dufferin's plan, 334
Consuls-General, their attitude towards the first Ministry, 200, 203
Controllers, appointment of, 230 *sqq.*; resignation, 272
Convention, Anglo-Turkish, of the Wolff-Mukhtar Mission, 411 *sqq.*
Cookson, Mr., Consul, 283
Corvée system, use and abuse, 35, 49; in connection with the Suez Canal, 35, 36; in arbitration, 37 *sqq.*; an instance, 77; on Ismail's estates, 168; Nubar's abolition, 442, 443, 512
Cotton industry, boom during American Civil War, 53, 54
Council of State (Divan Khedive), 61, 95
Courts of Justice, international, instituted, 126, 171; claim to jurisdiction in the Soudan, 504
Courts of Justice, native, 521, 522
Cromer, Earl of (Evelyn Baring), appointed on Public Debt Commission, 148; and International Commission of Inquiry, 175, 178, 179, 207; approached by Ismail's second Ministry, 210; appointed Controller, 231, 232; resignation, 245; Consul-General, 335; characteristics, 337; view of the Soudan evacuation, 342, 343; at the Ministerial crisis, 344; view of Gordon's mission, 353; relations with Nubar, 364; his protest against evacuation of the Soudan, 389; at the financial crisis (1884), 397; in the matter of the Wolff-Mukhtar Mission, 411; his reform of the Treasury, 430, 432; in conflict with Nubar Pasha, 436; the difficulties with Abbas II., 462, 465; obtains British funds for Soudan reconquest, 482
Customs reorganized by Ismail, 67

D.

DAIRA Sanieh lands, arrangements of the Commission of Liquidation, 235, 236; administration of, 238, 333
Daira Khassa Loan, 236
Damietta, British occupation of, 303
Daoud Pasha, Minister of War, 263
Debt, public, under Ismail, 71, 107, 110; identical with Khedive's debts, 53, 74, 85, 86, 93, 94, 96, 107, 108, 160, 162, 180; attitude of the Porte, 84; a legal check, 128; repudiated, 141, 142; proposed consolidation, 144, 145; Commission appointed, 146, 235; the Joubert and Goschen report, 153 *sqq.*; Nubar's view of, 173; Commission of Inquiry (1878) appointed, 174 *sqq.*; its decision, 187; arrangements of the Commission of Liquidation, 235 *sqq.*, 245
Derby, Earl of, Egyptian policy, 146, 147, 154, 174
Dervish Pasha, Turkish Envoy, 278, 287
Dervishes, the, as slave-traders, 247, 248, 317, 320; insurrection of, 320 *sqq.*, 501; sympathy for, in England, 249, 341, 351; the danger to Egypt, 341, 346, 368, 375, 419, 426; take Sinkat and Tokar, 347 *sqq.*; defeated by General Graham, 358; take Kassala, 421; advance on Egypt, 421 *sqq.*; defeated at Ginnis, 423; operations round Wady Halfa, 450, 472, 473; defeated at Firket, 486, Atbara, 489, and Omdurman, 490. *See also* Mahdi, Khalifa, Osman Digma
Dictatorship of the Arabi party, 272 *sqq.*; Anglo-French action against, 275 *sqq.*
Disraeli. *See* Beaconsfield
Divan Khedive, Grand Council of State, 61, 95
Djemil, Prince, 508
Domain lands, acquired by Ismail, 70, 109, 168, 173; inquiry by the Commission, 179, 183; proposed restitution, 186–188; loan on, 192, 197, 199, 233, 236; surrendered, 197, 232; administration of, 238, 333
Dongola, occupation of, under Mahomet Ali, 10; occupied by the Dervishes, 421; suggestions for recovery, 451; recovery of, 487
Dual Control, established, 230 *sqq.*; the native view, 250, 251; terminated, 272; impossibility of renewal, 304; final abolition, 328
Duem, Khalifa at, 496
Dufferin, Marquis of, 294, 295, 304; Envoy after the Arabi mutiny, 309, 310; nature and result of his mission, 327 *sqq.*; his report, 334, 362, 525; quits Egypt, 335

E.

ECONOMY, British principles of, introduced, 431 *sqq.*; unpopularity of, 432, 434 *sqq.*; in the Soudan campaign, 487
Egypt, the starting-point of its modern history, 2; under the Turkish Pashas, 2 *sqq.*; the beginnings of the Khedivate, 11; the Viceroyalty established, 17; the Khedivate established, 60 *sqq.*; under the Dual Control, 230 *sqq.*; under the Military Dictatorship, 272 *sqq.*; under British control, 329 *sqq.*, 515; British occupation inevitable, 516, 517; its benefits, 505, 517 *sqq.*; the future, 524 *sqq.*
Egyptian War, the, 293 *sqq.*
El Aziz, title of, proposed, 60
Elliot, Sir G., 130
El Teb, battle of, 348, 349, 358
England, early relations with Egypt, in alliance with Turkey, 5, 16, 17, 30, 32; in the matter of the Suez Canal, 27, 30, 36, 65, 66, 102, 103, 132, 297, 298, 399 *sqq.*, 401 *sqq.*; her policy favourable to reform, 131; early financial relations, 133 *sqq.*, 143, 145; joins in the Commission of Inquiry (1878), 174 *sqq.*; and Commission of Liquidation, 231 *sqq.*, 237; averse from intervention, 174, 178, 191, 293 *sqq.*, 305, 416, 417; co-operates with France, 174, 185, 203, 210, 230, 233, 268, 274 *sqq.*; action against the Arabi party, 268, 274 *sqq.*, 284 *sqq.*; left to intervene alone, 285, 295, 296; action at the Constantinople Conference, 294; at war, 293 *sqq.*; treatment of the Arabi conspirators, 308 *sqq.*; and its results, 314; refuses to send troops to the Soudan, 321; decides to evacuate the Soudan, 339 *sqq.*, 347, 350, 359; summons the London Conference, 371; offers to evacuate Egypt, 371, 372; arranges the Anglo-Turkish Convention, 411 *sqq.*; methods and results of administration, 427 *sqq.*, 440 *sqq.*; the occupation complete, 440, 443; the difficulties with Abbas II., 460 *sqq.*; a declaration of supremacy, 466; prepares to thwart French occupation of the White Nile, 478 *sqq.*; begins the reconquest of the Soudan, 479 *sqq.*, 483; action in the *Caisse* for funds for reconquest, 481; supplies funds, 482, 488; relations with Egypt in the "Condominium," 499 *sqq.*; reforms in Egypt, 427 *sqq.*, 431 *sqq.*, 505, 517 *sqq.*; the future, 524 *sqq.* *See also* Occupation
English officials, work of, in Egypt, 67, 80, 116, 121, 163, 164, 362, 364, 427, 428, 441, 527. *See also* Reforms
Equatorial provinces, Ismail's projected conquest, 80, 93
Estates of Ismail. *See* Domain, Daria
Eugenie, the Empress, 37; at the opening of the Suez Canal, 77, 78, 81; a contrast, 82, 83
Europeans, employment of, 15, 163, 164, 362; under the Dual Control, 246

F.

FAKRI PASHA, Minister of Justice, British veto on, 462
Fashoda, the French expedition to, 475 *sqq.*, 492
Fellaheen, and the corvée, 48, 49; oppression of, under Ismail, 77, 89 *sqq.*; as soldiers, 48, 90, 252, 321, 322, 347, 348, 429, 430, 484 *sqq.*; modern condition of, 520, 521
Firket recaptured, 486
Fitzgerald, Mr. Gerald, reforms in Treasury, 431; member of Committee of Finance, 431
Forster, Mr. W. E., 365, 366
France, early relations with Egypt, 3; favours Egyptian independence, 16, 17; in the matter of the Suez Canal, 29, 36, 132, 400, 404; adverse to reform, 131; in rivalry with England, 133, 396; financial relations, 132, 145, 146, 174, 180; co-operates with England, 174, 191, 203, 210, 230, 233, 268, 274, *sqq.*; joins in the Commission of Liquidation, 233 *sqq.*, 237; action against the Arabi party, 268, 274 *sqq.*; dissociated from English intervention, 285, 295, 296, 515; proposes Constantinople Conference, 294; acquiesces in British control, 333; action at the London Conference, 371, 372; secures rejection of the Anglo-Turkish (Wolff-Mukhtar) Convention, 414, 415; the effects thereof, 416, 417; favours anti-British attitude of Abbas II., 461, 463; negotiations for the

Marchand expedition, 475 *sqq.*; influences *Caisse* against Soudan advance, 481, 482; the Fashoda claim, 494, 495
Frere, Sir Bartle, 134
Freycinet, M. de, Egyptian policy, 270, 285, 295
Fuad Pasha, Grand Vizier, visits Egypt, 58

G.

GAMBETTA, M., action against the Arabi party, 268
Germany, relations with the Khedivate, 174, 233, 237, 294; represented at the London Conference, 371; intervention by (1879), 214 *sqq.*; action in the *Caisse* for the Soudan advance, 481
Giegler Pasha, in the Soudan, 320
Ginnis, battle of, 423
Girouard, Colonel E. P. C., 484
Gladstone, Right Hon. W. E., 53, 249, 412; policy towards Arabi, 266, 269, 284; decides on armed intervention, 293, 526; averse from annexation, 294, 305, 326, 340, 343; in the matter of General Gordon, 374, 378, 380; abandons the Soudan, 388, 390
Gordon, General C. G., Governor-General of the Soudan, 165; suppresses the slave trade, 165, 247, 248, 317, 376; suggested by Ismail as Commissioner of Inquiry, 175; his work as Governor, 247 *sqq.*; his return to the Soudan, 350 *sqq.*; the responsibility therefor, 373 *sqq.*, 393; his policy towards the rebels, 355, 356, 359, 374 *sqq.*; his offer to Zobehr, 355, 376, 377; stays at Khartoum, 378; the expedition of relief, 381 *sqq.*; his death, 381, 383
Goschen, Lord (Mr. G. J. Goschen), his financial inquiry and report, 151 *sqq.*, 155, 158, 160, 161, 166; the Goschen decree, 161, 162
Graham, General Sir Gerald, commands Tokar expedition, 357, 358; Suakin expedition, 387
Granville, Earl of, Egyptian policy, 270, 275, 294, 325, 342, 406, 437; at the London Conference, 371
Green, Mr., 116
Gregory, Sir William, supports Arabi, 259 *sqq.*, 266
Grenfell, Sir Francis, Sirdar, 422; at Ginnis, 423

H.

HAFEZ PASHA, 239, 240
Harem system, the, 62
Hartington, Marquis of, 379, 386
Hassan, Prince, in the Soudan, 165
Hawkshaw, Sir John, 27
Herbin, M., murder of, 381
Hewett, Admiral, at Suakin, 347, 349
Hicks Pasha, commands in the Soudan, 322, 323; annihilation of his force, 323, 324, 338, 339
Hicks-Beach, Sir Michael, 488
Hussein, Prince, 508

I.

IBRAHIM PASHA, eldest son of Mahomet Ali, 10, 16; commands against the Mamelukes, 10; accession and death, 17; his early patronage of Nubar Pasha, 112 *sqq.*
Ibrahim, Prince, 508
Ibreeim, refuge of the Mamelukes, 10
Iddesleigh, Earl of (Sir Stafford Northcote), 408
International Boards, administration by, 238, 246, 333
International Commission of the Debt. *See* Caisse de la Dette
International Commission (Suez Canal neutrality), 399 *sqq.*
Intervention, European, against Mahomet Ali, 16; recommended by Mr. Cave's report, 140; beginnings of, 151 *sqq.*; Ismail's view, 148, 149; Nubar's view, 166 *sqq.*, 189; combined for Ismail's deposition, 214 *sqq.*; British, against Arabi, 285, 289 *sqq.*
Ismail Pasha, Khedive, 22; accession, 33, 47, 50; revises Suez Canal concession, 34, 66; character, 51, 52, 528; and rule, 52 *sqq.*; his prodigality, 52, 57, 58, 59, 65 *sqq.*, 79, 80, 96, 106, 107, 243, 244, 515; early life, 56; public works and improvements, 67, 68, 92; his ambition, 69, 70; acquisitions of land, 70, 109, 168, 173, 179, 183, 186 *sqq.*; his debts, 67 *sqq.*, 79, 93, 94, 96, 100, 107 *sqq.*, 164 *sqq.*; his patronage of the Suez Canal scheme, 73 *sqq.*; his financial muddle and ruin, 85 *sqq.*, 186 *sqq.*; excessive

taxation, 89 *sqq.*; dealings with the Mufettish, 88 *sqq.*, 154 *sqq.*, 239; receives the Cave Mission, 134 *sqq.*; repudiates his debts, 141; proposes unification of debts, 144; appoints the Debt Commission, 146; his attitude towards intervention, 148, 149; his debts the cause of intervention, 167, 174, 515; appoints Commission of Inquiry, 175 *sqq.*; his action towards the Commission 181 *sqq.*; accepts the Anglo-French Ministry, 188 *sqq.*; a constitutional ruler, 195, 198; intrigues against the Ministry, 199 *sqq.*; appoints native Ministers, 209; success of his *coup d'état*, 211; his deposition, 215 *sqq.*, 250; later life, 220 *sqq.*, 470; and death, 470; dealings with Arabi, 254, 255; opinion of evacuation of the Soudan, 340, 472; rumours of reinstatement, 438, 470

Ismail Pasha Sadyk (Mufettish), expert in taxation, 88 *sqq.*, 165; dealings with the Cave Mission, 135, 137; dismissal and death, 154 *sqq.*; suit regarding his will, 238 *sqq.*

Ismailia, British occupation of, 299

Italy, relations with the Khedivate, 147, 148, 181, 233, 237, 294, 479; represented at the London Conference, 371; the Abyssinian war, 474; action in the *Caisse* for the Soudan advance, 481

J.

Jeb el Ghedidur, Khalifa at, 496

Joint note (1882), 268

Joubert, M., his financial inquiry and report, 151 *sqq.*, 160, 166

Justice, administration of, in International courts, 41, 126, 333, 443; Nubar Pasha's plan, 443; in the Soudan, 504

K.

Kafr el Zahat, railway catastrophe at, 23

Kashgil, massacre of Hicks Pasha's army at, 339

Kassala, captured by Osman Digma, 421; held by Italian troops, 479

Kassassin, action at, 300

Khaireddin Pasha, heirs' lawsuit against Suez Canal Company, 41 *sqq.*

Khalifa, the (Abdullah el Taashi), and the invasion of Egypt, 421, 424; his rule established at Omdurman, 451, 501; failure of the invasion, 473; supposed negotiations with French officials, 477, 492; his opposition to the army of reconquest, 489; his last campaign, 496, 497; and death, 497

Khartoum threatened by the Dervishes, 321, 339, 347; evacuation ordered, 339; Gordon's arrival, 355; importance of holding, 375; the siege, 380; fall, 383 *sqq.*; recapture, 491

Khedivate, the, granted to Ismail, 60; becomes hereditary, 65; constitutional changes, 189 *sqq.*; loss of prestige under Tewfik, 277, 288, 308, 314; in Lord Dufferin's plan, 334; relations to British Protectorate, 466, 467, 506

Khedive, title of, explained, 60, 61. *See* Ismail, Tewfik, Abbas II.

Kitchener, Lord (Sir H. H. Kitchener), Sirdar, in the matter of the Halfa review, 464, 465; commands the expedition of reconquest, 479 *sqq.*, 483 *sqq.*; his opinion of the battle of Omdurman, 491; in the matter of Fashoda, 492, 493; Governor of the Soudan, 502

Kordofan, Hicks Pasha's expedition, 322

Kremer, Herr von, member of Commission of Inquiry, 175, 181

L.

Lands appropriated by Ismail. *See* Domain, Daira

Law, source of Egyptian code, 127

Law of Liquidation, 233, 235, 237, 245, 394; proposals of the London Conference, 371; violated by Lord Northbrook's proposal, 398

Le Cloud, M., article on the Fashoda incident, 475, 476

Lesseps, Ferdinand de, obtains concession for Suez Canal, 24, 32; early career, 25; and character, 31; forms the Company, 32; his negotiations and management, 32, 34, 37 *sqq.*, 171; recollections of, 44 *sqq.*; president of International Commission of Inquiry, 175 *sqq.*, 232; influences

French policy, 270, 284, 299; opposes military use of Canal by Great Britain, 298; monopoly rights in question, 401 *sqq.*
Liquidation, commission, *see* Commission; Law of, *see* Law
Lloyd, Mr. Clifford, Minister of Interior, 365; Chief of Police, 366, 367
Lloyd, Mr. J. H., legal adviser, 129
Loan, first Egyptian, raised by Said, 24; loans raised by Ismail, 53, 66, 69, 71, 81, 85; interference of the Porte, 84; of 1884, 394, 399, 427. *See* Debt, Unified Loan
London Conference, 371–373, 397
London Convention, 309 *sqq.*
Lucas and Aird, Messrs., 387
Lyons, Lord, 269, 285

M.

MAHDI, title explained, 317, 318
Mahdi, the, of Keneh, rising of, 318, 319
Mahdi, the (Mahomet Achmed), of Dongola, rise of, 249, 319; progress of the insurrection, 320 *sqq.*; his agents in Egypt, 308, 369 405; Gordon's negotiations, 375; takes Khartoum, 383 *sqq.*; his message to Gordon, 385; his victories, 386, 391, 420, 501; Lord Wolseley's view, 390; his death, 391, 419
Maher Pasha, 405
Mahmoud, Dervish leader, defeated at Atbara, 489
Mahmoud Fehmi, trial of, 311, 312
Mahmoud Sami, Pasha, in the Arabi mutiny, 255 *sqq.*; War Minister, 263, 267; Prime Minister, 270 *sqq.*; trial, 311, 312
Mahmoudieh canal, 49
Mahomet Achmed. *See* Mahdi
Mahomet Ali Pasha, 2, 47; rise of, 5; becomes Pasha in Egypt, 6; crushes the Mamelukes, 7, 8; his character, ambitions, and rule, 10 *sqq.*; attempts a *coup d'état*, 15, 16; recognized as Viceroy, 17; his abdication and death, 17; his reign reviewed, 47 *sqq.*, 110, 217; his Grand Council of State (Divan Khedive), 61
Malaret, Baron de, financial controller, 154, 192, 196, 210
Malet, Mr. E., Consul-General, 270, 305, 336
Mallet, Sir Lewis, 179
Mamelukes, the, their rule, 3, 9, 47; rise against Mahomet Ali, 7; massacre of, 8, 278
Marchand, Major, expedition of, 475 *sqq.*; at Fashoda, 492, 493, 495
Marriott, General, controller of railways, 154
Massacre of the Mamelukes, 8; the, at Alexandria, 279 *sqq.*
Massowah, Italian occupation of, 474
Maxwell, Sir Benson, Procureur-General, 367
Mekemeh, the (Mahometan tribunal), 239, 241
Menelek, Negus of Abyssinia, relations with Italy and England, 474, 476; negotiations with France, 475 *sqq.*
Metemmeh, battle of, 382, 384
Milner, Lord (Sir A. Milner), 152
Ministers, Egyptian (of the Khedive), limitations of, 118, 428, 511, 525
Ministry, first (Anglo-French), of Ismail, 189 *sqq.*; Nubar's view, 192 *sqq.*; its achievements, 204; dismissal, 209, 211
Ministry, second (native), of Ismail, 209
Mitchell, Mr., tutor to the Khedive, 447, 458
Moukabala, loan decree, 94 *sqq.*; arrangements of the Commission of Liquidation, 236
Mufettish (chief steward). *See* Ismail Pasha Sadyk, Omar Pasha Lufti
Mukhtar Pasha, Turkish Envoy to Egypt, 411 *sqq.*, 438
Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, Prime Minister, 450, 461, 469

N.

NAPIER, Mr. Mark, counsel for Arabi, 310
Napoleon III., 26, 37, 73, 81
Negus, the. *See* Menelek
Nineteenth Century, the, articles in, 172, 326
Northbrook, Earl of, High Commissioner (1884) to Egypt, 307 *sqq.*
Northcote, Sir Stafford. *See* Iddesleigh
Notables, Chamber of. *See* Chamber
Nubar Pasha, 3, 6, 109; early career, 112 *sqq.*; judicial reforms, 122 *sqq.*,

171, 512; resigns office, 144; attitude towards intervention, 134, 166 *sqq.*; towards England and France, 169 *sqq.*; his return to office, 186; his support of the Commission of Inquiry, 186, 188; Premier of the first Ministry, 190 *sqq.*; demonstration of officers against, 202; dismissal, 203, 208; Foreign Minister, 204; his possible suggestion of the German intervention, 215; dismissed by Tewfik, 230; story of Hicks Pasha, 323; again Premier, 344, 345, 361, 392; his policy and difficulties, 361 *sqq.*, 394 *sqq.*; his attitude towards British occupation, 362, 369; supposed Anglophil tendencies, 396; attitude towards British supervision, 434 *sqq.*, 440; the police controversy, 439; his dismissal, 440, 443, 444; his work in abolishing the corvée, 442, 443, 512; again Premier, 466; his dismissal, 469; later life, 509 *sqq.*; and death, 511; characteristics, 512, 513, 523
Nubia, invaded by Ibrahim, 10

O.

Occupation, an Anglo-French, unworkable, 304
Occupation, British, early hints of, 30, 135, 136, 138, 139, 149, 172; Nubar's view, 169, 361 *sqq.*, 434 *sqq.*; not contemplated by British Ministers, 138, 139, 293 *sqq.*, 296, 304, 325 *sqq.*, 394, 416, 514, 515; necessitated, as temporary, 305, 309, 325, 334, 335, 343, 394; the agreement of 1882, 305, 306; decided on, 440, 443; Tewfik's view of, 434, 445 *sqq.*; becomes a virtual Protectorate, 444, 467; inevitable, 516, 517; its future, 524 *sqq.*
Omar Pasha Lufti, Finance Minister, 185; president of the Commission of Inquiry (Alexandria massacre), 283
Om Debrikat, Khalifa at, 497
Omdurman, 489; battle of, 490, 491
Osman Digma, rise of, 347; defeats Egyptian troops, 348, 349; defeated by General Graham, 357, 358; in the Eastern Soudan, 384, 451
Osman Pasha Rifki, trial of, 273

P.

Pall Mall Gazette, the, 352
Palmer, Prof., murder of, 330
Palmerston, Lord, 102, 336, 350; and the Suez Canal, 30, 36
Pendjeh incident, its influence on the Soudan question, 389
Persigny, Duc de, arbitrator on Suez Canal corvée question, 38
Pibworth, Mr., 283
Police, controversy respecting control of, 439, 440
Port Said, British occupation of, 299
Ports, the, administration of, 333
Postal service, reorganized by Ismail, 68
Power, Mr., murder of, 381
Preferred Debt, arrangements of the Committee of Liquidation, 235
Prince of Wales in Egypt, 134
Privileged Debt, arrangements of the Commission of Liquidation, 236
Protectorate. *See* Occupation
Public works, of Ismail, 67, 68, 92; British, 505, 522

R.

Railways, first laid in Egypt, 20; extended by Ismail, 68, 80, 92; European control proposed, 153; returns of, 163; arrangements of the Commission of Liquidation, 235, 238; administration of, 333; laid for the Soudan war, 387, 484, 488
Raouf Pasha, Governor-General of the Soudan, 320
Reforms, British, in Egypt, 427, 433, 505, 517 *sqq.*; army, 429, 430; Treasury, 431, 433, 522; unpopularity of, 363, 432, 434; Nubar's views, 434 *sqq.*; Riaz' views, 449; the native view, 522 *sqq.*
Revenue, public, hypothecation of by Commission of Liquidation, 235 *sqq.*; improvement under British supervision, 454, 522
Riaz Pasha, Vice-President of Commission of Inquiry, 175, 177; Foreign Minister, 183; opposes Arabi, 257; Prime Minister, 314; view of the punishment of Arabi, 314; early career and character, 314, 315; opposed to evacuation of the Soudan, 344; member of Committee of

Finance, 431 ; again Premier, 449 ; attitude towards reforms, 449, 463 ; resignation, 450 ; reappointment, 463 ; after the frontier incident, 465 ; his resignation, 466
Ribton, Mr., 283
Romaine, Mr., appointed financial controller, 154 ; connection with Ismail's first Ministry, 192, 196, 210
Rosebery, Earl of, Egyptian policy, 463
Rothschild, Messrs., Suez share loan, 103 ; Domain lands loan, 192, 197, 199, 233
Rowton, Lord, 103
Royle, Mr. C., 287
Russia, intervention of (1831), 16 ; represented at the London Conference, 371 ; action against the Anglo-Turkish Convention, 414, 415 ; action in the *Caisse* against the Soudan advance, 481

S.

SAID PASHA, Viceroy, 22, 49, 56 ; his accession, 22 ; raises Egypt's first loan, 24, 52 ; grants concession for Suez Canal, 24, 73 ; death, 71
Salisbury, Marquis of, 178, 390 ; Egyptian policy, 406 *sqq.*, 412, 440 ; in the matter of Fashoda, 494 *sqq.*
Scott, Sir John, legal adviser, 450
Senaar, occupation of, under Mahomet Ali, 10
Seymour, Sir Beauchamp (Lord Alcester), bombards Alexandria, 288, 289
Shendy, in the hands of the Mahdi, 380
Sinkat, besieged by Dervishes, 347 ; taken, 349
Slavery, Ismail's plans for suppression, 80 ; Gordon's crusade against, 165, 247, 248, 317, 376 ; nominal abolition of, 316 ; its consequences, 317 ; Gordon's plan of re-establishment, 355, 356, 376, 377
Smuggling, prevalence of, 121
Soubreyan, Baron de, on the British occupation, 343
Soudan, first invasion of, by Ibrahim, 9, 10 ; Ismail's expeditions, 68, 80, 164 ; under Gordon, 165, 247 *sqq.* ; rise and spread of Mahdism, 319 *sqq.* ; evacuation decided on, 339 *sqq.*, 346, 381 ; evacuation unpopular in Egypt, 341, 342, 344, 451 ; British intervention necessitated, 373, 378 *sqq.* ; indifference in Egypt, 381 ; progress of the campaign, 381 *sqq.* ; the Mahdi victorious, 386 ; the Suakin campaign, 386 *sqq.* ; evacuation of, 390, 393 ; British apathy for its recovery, 452, 473, 474 ; Sir Samuel Baker's plan, 452 *sqq.* ; resumes trade with Egypt, 473 ; French negotiations and expedition, 474 *sqq.* ; British reconquest begins, 478 *sqq.*, 483 ; completed, 491 ; new administration of, 499 *sqq.*
Stanton, Colonel, Consul-General, 101, 133
Stead, Mr. W. T., 352
Stephenson, General Sir Frederick, 379, 422 ; at Ginnis, 423
Stephenson, Sir Robert, constructor of first Egyptian railway, 20
Stewart, General Sir Herbert, at Abu Klea, 382
Stewart, Colonel, accompanies General Gordon to Khartoum, 355 ; murdered, 381
Stone, General, Commander-in-Chief, opposes Arabi, 257
Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord, 337
Suakin, British occupation of, 349 ; first expedition from, 358 ; second expedition from, 387, 388
Suakin-Berber route, importance of in Soudan war, 359 ; railway, construction of, 387 ; abandoned, 388
Succession to the Khedivate, rearranged, 61 *sqq.*
Suez Canal, first concession granted, 24, 32 ; early theories and opposition, 26 *sqq.* ; terms of the original concession, 33, 34 ; Ismail's revision and assistance, 34, 65, 66 ; the corvée arbitration, 38, 39 ; cost of construction, 40 ; the Khaireddin lawsuit, 41 *sqq.* ; the opening, 52, 73 *sqq.* ; concessions granted by Said recalled, 66 ; no profit to Egypt, 55, 103, 401, 405 ; shares sold to Great Britain, 102, 103, 132 ; threatened by Arabi, 295 ; occupied by British troops, 297, 298 ; neutrality question, 297 ; at the London Convention, 399 *sqq.* ; a rival canal projected, 401 *sqq.*
Suez Canal Company formed, 32 ; negotiations with Said, 33 ; and Ismail, 34, 65, 66 ; the corvée arbitration, 37 *sqq.* ; the Khaireddin suit, 41, 43 ; and the London Convention,

400; its monopoly rights in question, 401, 402; British directors admitted, 405
Suez Canal shares, Khedive's, 100, 101; purchase by England, 102, 103
Sulieman Sami, witness at Arabi's trial, 312; hanged, 313
Syndicate, Grand, of Paris, 187
Syria, invaded by Mahomet Ali, 15; evacuated, 16

T.

TAXATION, excessive, of Ismail, 89 *sqq.*; under the Commission of Liquidation, 246; under British supervision, 522
Tel-el-Kebir, battle of, 300
Tewfik Pasha, Khedive, 68; President of Council in Ismail's first Ministry, 204; accession, 217 *sqq.*, 227; early life, 228; dismisses Nubar, 230; his retrenchments, 243, 244, 252; conflict with the Arabi party, 256, 257, 263, 264, 270 *sqq.*; possibility of deposition, 274, 275, 287; appeals to the Sultan, 277; his position at time of Arabi's mutiny, 287 *sqq.*; re-enters Cairo in state, 305; his punishment of Arabi disallowed, 308 *sqq.*, 369, 445; his authority weakened, 314, 369, 445; story of Hicks Pasha, 324; opposes evacuation of Soudan, 342, 446; desires Turkish assistance against the Mahdi, 342; approves Gordon's mission, 353; his attitude towards British occupation, 370, 396, 397, 434, 445 *sqq.*; towards Suez Canal Company, 401; towards the new army, 429, 430; towards the Wolff-Mukhtar mission, 438, 439; dismisses Nubar Pasha, 440; review of his reign and character, 445 *sqq.*, 455; his popularity, 455; his death, 455, 456
Tigrane Pasha, proposed Premiership of, 461, 462
Tokar, besieged by Dervishes, 347; taken, 349; the relief expedition, 357, 358
Toski, battle of, 424
Toulba, trial of, 311, 312
Treasury, the, reforms in, 431, 432, 522
Treaty with the Porte, of 1841, 16, 64; modified, 61
Tribute paid to Turkey, 65, 236
Trollope, Anthony, 116
Turkey, its conquest and rule in Egypt, 2 *sqq.*; recognizes Mahomet Ali as Viceroy, 17; attitude towards Suez Canal, 27, 65, 66; friendly relations with Egypt, 58; concedes Khedivial title, 60; and hereditary succession, 65; attitude towards Ismail's loans, 84, 85; towards the Capitulations, 123; backs Ismail's defiance of the Powers, 211, 213, 215, 216; consents to his deposition, 216, 217; its intervention against Arabi suggested, 269, 275, 295, 296; and granted, 277; attitude towards Arabi's mutiny, 295, 296; condones the Alexandria massacre, 283; its intervention unpopular in Egypt, 304; its assistance against the Mahdi suggested, 342; represented at the London Conference, 371; invited to garrison Egypt, 408 *sqq.*

U.

UNIFICATION (of debts) decree, 145
Unified Debt, arrangements of the Commission of Liquidation, 235
Unified Loan, arrangements of the Commission of Liquidation, 235

V.

VICEROY. *See* Mahomet Ali, Ibrahim, Abbas I., Said
Viceroyalty, granted to Mahomet Ali, 17; becomes the Khedivate, 60 *sqq.*
Vincent, Sir Edgar, member of Finance Committee, 431
Vivian, Mr., Consul-General, 185

W.

WADDINGTON, M., proposes Commission of Inquiry, 174, 179; action towards Anglo-French Ministry, 196
Wad el Nijami, Dervish leader, defeated at Toski, 424
Wady Halfa, as frontier post, 390, 472; operations around, 422 *sqq.*; review at, 464
Waghorn, Lieutenant, 29
Wakf (Mosque) lands, appropriated, 49
Wallace, Sir Mackenzie, 278

Water supply, the, modern state, 505
Wilson, Sir Charles, at Arabi's trial, 311, 312; in the Gordon Relief Expedition, 382, 383
Wilson, Sir Rivers, Vice-President of Commission of Inquiry, 175, 178, 188; Minister of Finance, 191, 196, 197; demonstration of officers against, 202; protests against Nubar's dismissal, 203; his achievements as Minister, 204; proposed financial reforms, 207; his dismissal, 209; non-selection as Controller, 231; President of Commission of Liquidation, 232, 237
Wingate, Sir Francis R., finally defeats the Khalifa, 497; Sirdar and Governor of the Soudan, 503
Wolff, Sir Henry Drummond, mission to Egypt, 410 *sqq.*, 438
Wolff-Mukhtar Mission, 409 *sqq.*
Wolseley, Viscount (Sir Garnet), despatched against Arabi, 293; advances on Cairo, 299; wins battle of Tel-el-Kebir, 300; enters Cairo, 305; commands the Gordon Relief Expedition, 379 *sqq.*; a despatch to Lord Hartington (Gordon rescue), 379, 380; to Lord Salisbury (Mahdism), 390; the deportation of Zobehr Pasha, 405; favours withdrawal of British troops, 408
Wood, General Sir Evelyn, in the Egyptian War, 303; Commander-in-Chief, 331; reorganizes the Egyptian army, 429

Y.

YOUNG EGYPT PARTY, the, 462

Z.

ZOBEHR PASHA, his relations with General Gordon, 355, 376, 377; deported, 405

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